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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 23 APRIL 2025 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 24 SHAWWAL, 1446 AH | Vol 4 | Issue No 109 | Pages: 8

PHOTO: PTI

Eyeing space & energy deal, Modi visits Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH, 22 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Jeddah on Tuesday for a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia, aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation and strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations. He was received at King Abdulaziz International Airport by Prince Saud bin Mishaal bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Makkah Region, and Majid Al-Kassabi, the Saudi Minister of Commerce. Modi cut short Saudi trip after terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir. *—PTI*

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Parl above all institutions: VP hits out at SC

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said that every word spoken by a constitutional authority is guided by supreme national interest, as he hit out at his critics for questioning his remarks on a recent Supreme Court order. Addressing a Delhi University event, Dhankhar said efforts of forces working against the country to tarnish and run down institutions should be neutralised, "be it that of the presidency". Dhankhar said, "There is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament. Parliament is supreme... Let me tell you, it is as supreme as every individual in the country."*—PTI*

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ED to probe Gensol Engineering for money laundering

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) may investigate the alleged diversion of funds and financial misconduct by the promoters of Gensol Engineering Ltd.

ED froze a fresh few lakh shares in Gensol of a Dubai-based "hawala operator" being investigated in the Mahadev app case.

ED is analysing the recent Securities and Exchange Board of India report that barred the promoter brothers, Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi from the securities market for various violations, including siphoning off loan funds from their publicly listed company for personal use. The agency will also probe violations of foreign exchange law.*—PTI*

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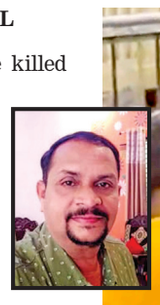
Terrorists kill 27 in Pahalgam, 2 from K'taka

Victims are mostly tourists including foreigners; LeT faction claims responsibility for attack

PAHALGAM, 22 APRIL



At least 27 people were killed after terrorists opened fire at a popular tourist spot near Kashmir's Pahalgam town on Tuesday. The victims were mostly tourists, including foreigners and two men from Karnataka.

Terrorists shot dead Manjunath, a businessman from Shivamogga district, had travelled to the valley with his wife Pallavi and their son. The second victim from Karnataka is Bharath Bhushan, while his wife Sujatha and their three-year-old son were spared, sources said.

This is the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

The 27 dead included two foreigners and two locals, a high-ranking official said. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the attack as "much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years".

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met officials after the attack and a team of Karnataka officials left for Kashmir.

The attack took place around 3pm, officials said. Baisaran, about 6km from Pahalgam, is a meadow ringed by pine forests and mountains and is a favourite among tourists. Armed terrorists came into the grassland, dubbed 'mini-Switzerland', and started firing at tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking, officials and eyewitnesses said. At least 20 people were injured.

Meanwhile, the Resistance Front (TRF), a shadow group of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group, claimed responsibility.

Officials said it was possible the terror group members could have crossed over from Kishtwar in Jammu and reached Baisaran through Kokernag in south Kashmir. Army has been conducting search operations in Kishtwar and Udhampur since 9 April.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a visit to Saudi Arabia, and reached Srinagar in the evening to review security. "Those behind this heinous act will be brought to justice... they will not be spared," Modi posted on X.

Cries for help were heard as lifeless bodies lay motionless in blood. Some put the number of attackers at five.

Manjunath Rao from Shivamogga; A survivor cries after terrorists attacked a group of tourists in Pahalgam on Tuesday; The injured were taken to the govt-owned Pahalgam Club under tight security. Some were brought down from the meadow, a popular tou rist spot, by locals on their ponies ***PHOTO: PTI***

As gunshots rang out, there was panic and tourists ran for cover but there was no place to hide in the wide, open space, said another woman tourist.

Pallavi said, "Three to four people attacked us. I told them – kill me too, you've already killed my husband. One of them said, 'I won't kill you. Go tell this to Modi'." "My husband was shot in the head while seven others were also injured in the attack," a woman survivor told PTI over phone. A woman said terrorists first asked the name before shooting down the victims. The tourists gathered at Baisaran were from Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Baisaran is accessible only by foot, which makes the rescue difficult. *—PTI*

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EC says Congress never flagged abnormal voting

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Election Commission has rejected allegations made by Rahul Gandhi concerning unusual voter turnout during the Maharashtra assembly elections, stating the Congress party did not raise any concerns during or immediately after the polling.

Gandhi, speaking in Boston, claimed that 6.5 million voters cast their ballots in the last two hours of voting, questioning the feasibility of such a turnout. "For a voter to vote, it takes approximately three minutes, which would imply voters were queued until 2am, which did not happen," he argued.

In response, Election Commission sources clarified that a total of 6,40,878,588 electors voted from 7 am to 6 pm, averaging about 58 lakh votes per hour. They estimated that approximately 1.16 crore voters could have participated in the last two hours, meaning the reported 65 lakh votes were below the expected turnout.

Election officials noted that polling agents were present at each booth, and no substantial grievances were raised by Congress. They further emphasised that voter lists were prepared according to the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and that appeals regarding electoral rolls were minimal, reflecting no significant concerns before the election. *—PTI*

Ramdev's 'sharbat jihad' remark shocks conscience: Delhi HC

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday said Baba Ramdev's purported remark of "sharbat jihad" on Hamdard's Rooh Afza "shocked its conscience" and was indefensible, prompting the Yoga guru to assure he would immediately take down related online content.

While hearing a plea of Hamdard National Foundation,Justice Amit Bansal said, "It shocks the conscience of the court. It is indefensible..."

Following the court's warning, Ramdev's counsel said all advertisements in print or video, apart from social media posts over the contentious remarks would be immediately removed.

- Following the court's warning, Ramdev's counsel said all advertisements in print or video, would be immediately removed.

The Yoga guru was ordered to file the affidavit within five days. The matter would be heard on 1 May.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi representing Hamdard, said Ramdev had claimed the money earned from Rooh Afza was used to build madrasas and mosques, promoting "communal divide."

Ramdev defended by saying he did not name any brand or community.

Senior advocate Rajiv Nayar, representing Ramdev and Patanjali, argued Hamdard was not a custodian of the religion.

Ramdev had previously faced strictures from the Supreme Court for targeting allopathy.

The court said that though Ramdev can have his opinions "in his head", he need not express them.

On 15 April, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh had filed an FIR against Ramdev, accusing him of spreading religious hatred. *—PTI*

PRAYERS FOR POPE

People attend a religious service for the Late Pope Francis at the St Joseph cathedral in Bucharest, Romania, on Tuesday. Karnataka government on Tuesday announced a two-day state mourning as a mark of respect. All official entertainment programmes are being prohibited and the National Flag will be flown at half-mast ***PHOTO: PTI***

Vance asks India to buy energy, defence hardware

JAIPUR, 22 APRIL:

US Vice President JD Vance on Tuesday called on India to remove non-tariff barriers, open its markets further, and procure more American energy and defence equipment. Speaking at an event in Jaipur, Vance outlined a roadmap for deepening bilateral ties and hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "special person".

Accompanied by his wife Usha Chilukuri and their three children, Vance landed in Delhi on Monday. He and PM Modi held wide-ranging talks, welcoming "significant progress" towards a mutually beneficial trade agreement.

"We want greater access to Indian markets. This is a great place to do business," Vance said, adding that deeper collaboration could help both nations counter unfair competition in global markets.

He welcomed India's move to amend its civil nuclear liability laws, which had earlier restricted US companies from exporting small modular reactors or building larger plants.Vance also pitched stronger defence ties, urging India to procure advanced US systems like the F-35 jets.

"Our military equipment is best-in-class. From Javelins to Strykers, we're ready to co-produce with India," he said. *—PTI*

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Trainer aircraft crash in Gujarat kills pilot

AMRELI, 22 APRIL

A trainee pilot tragically lost his life when a trainer aircraft from a private aviation academy crashed in a residential area of Amreli district on Tuesday afternoon. The incident occurred around 12.30pm, resulting in the aircraft colliding with a tree before landing in an open space on Giriya Road.

According to Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kharat, the solo pilot had taken off from Amreli airport shortly before the accident. The aircraft caught fire upon impact, but fortunately, no residents were injured as it first struck a tree.

Emergency services, including four fire brigade teams, swiftly arrived to control the blaze. *—PTI*

'THOUGHT BENGALURU WAS SAFE'

City prof beaten for objecting to littering

Aurobindo Gupta ***PHOTO:***

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL:

A college professor was allegedly assaulted by a group of men after he objected to them littering the roadside in Kumarswamy Layout. Professor Aurobindo Gupta, who filed a police complaint, claimed he suffered fractures on his face and a concussion in the attack.

According to Gupta, the incident occurred on Sunday evening while he was riding his bike. He spotted a group of individuals carelessly throwing garbage on the road. Concerned that the trash could cause vehicles to skid, he asked them to stop. This, he alleged, enraged the group, who then assaulted him with their helmets.

- The Kumarswamy Layout Police have registered a case and are investigating the matter based on the professor's complaint and supporting visuals.

Gupta later shared a video showing visible facial injuries, which he submitted as evidence. "I came to Bengaluru thinking it was a safe place to work. But incidents like this are tarnishing the city's image," he told reporters, demanding justice.

The Kumarswamy Layout Police have registered a case and are investigating the matter based on the professor's complaint and supporting visuals.

Meanwhile, in a separate case, Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda confirmed that a road rage incident involving an Indian Air Force officer and a biker in Byappanahalli is under investigation. He clarified that it was not related to any language dispute, and evidence is being reviewed before drawing conclusions. *— ANI*

Can't allow HCs to exercise power under Art 142: SC

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea which sought the power of the top court under Article 142 of the Constitution to be granted to the high courts.

Article 142 empowers the top court to pass "any decree or order necessary for doing complete justice in any case or matter pending before it" within the country.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan wondered how could it allow such a plea and said, "How can we grant such prayer? It requires an amendment to the Constitution. You go to Parliament." *— PTI*

2 from K'taka top UPSC

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

Karnataka celebrated a proud moment as two of its medical professionals secured top ranks in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2024, the results of which were declared on Tuesday.

Dr R Rangamanju from Bengaluru secured All-India Rank 24, while **Dr Sachin Basavaraj** Guttur from Kodiyal village in Haveri stood at Rank 41, both making it to the top 50. "This was my fourth attempt.I look forward to serving the country," said Dr Guttur. The UPSC announced that 1,009 candidates cleared the examination this year.

In a story of perseverance, A Madhu from Iragasandra village in Kolar cleared the exam with Rank 544 in his fourth attempt. The son of farmers Anandappa and Sushilamma, Madhu is a BSc Agriculture graduate who studied in a government school and later at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Chikkaballapur.

Madhu cracked the exam entirely through self-study without any coaching. *— Salar News*

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Karnataka won't allow Hindi imposition: CM

MANDYA, 22 APRIL

Karnataka Chief Minister on Monday firmly opposed the Centre's alleged attempts to impose Hindi, reaffirming the state's commitment to its two-language policy. Speaking to reporters in Addihalli, Mandya, he declared, 'I will not allow Hindi imposition. If the Centre tries to impose it, we will not accept it. That is our government's stand.' He clarified that Karnataka follows a two-language model Kannada and English and has no plans to adopt a three-language policy. 'The policy is to teach the mother tongue and English,' he added. When informed that Hindi was already being taught in some schools, the Chief Minister responded that this did not reflect official policy. He reiterated that the state would only support education in Kannada and English, rejecting any pressure to include Hindi. —*PTI*

Free BMTC travel for PUC students from 24 April

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

Students appearing for the Second PUC Exam-2 (24 April to 8 May, 2025) can travel free on BMTC's ordinary bus services by showing their hall tickets or admission cards, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) announced. To support students, BMTC will also run additional bus trips based on demand and allow buses to stop at request points near examination centres. This initiative, aimed at easing travel stress for students, comes as part of BMTC's ongoing commitment to the education sector. Officials urged students to carry their admission tickets to avail the benefit. BMTC already offers concessional passes during the academic year and has assured full support for smooth student travel during exams. —***Salar News***

Saw terrorist shoot husband, says Shivamogga woman

Manjunath Rao had gone to Pahalgam with his wife & son

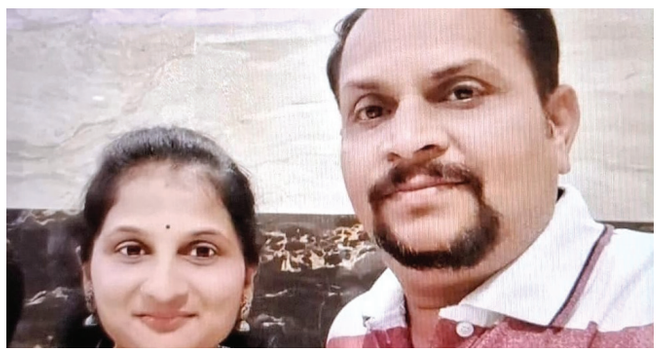
SHIVAMOGGA, 22 APRIL

A businessman from Shivamogga district in Karnataka was shot dead by terrorists in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, his family said.

Manjunath Rao, 47, hailing from Vijayanagar in Shivamogga district, had gone to Pahalgam with his wife Pallavi and son Abhijaya.

"My husband was shot dead by terrorists in front of our eyes," Pallavai told local news channels in Karnataka over the phone.

She further said that she asked the terrorists to kill her as well, to which they replied that she should be alive to convey the message to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Manjunath Rao and his wife Pallavi ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah condoled Manjunath Rao's demise and assured all support to his family.

According to senior officials, several tourists were killed and at least 20 were injured when terrorists opened fire in a picturesque meadow near Kashmir's Pahalgam town.

"I strongly condemn the heinous terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam, J&K. Kannadigas are among the victims of this shocking incident. Upon receiving the news, I convened an emergency meeting and reviewed the situation with the Chief Secretary and senior police officials. I have also spoken to the Resident Commissioner in Delhi," Siddaramaiah said on 'X'.

He said following his directions, two teams - one of senior officers and another of police personnel - have been dispatched An adventure team from the Sports Department, led by Commissioner Chethan, is also en route.One of the family members of Manjunath said, "We have not informed Manjunath's mother yet. We don't know how we will tell her." Neighbours, relatives, and friends made a beeline to meet the bereaved family. —*PTI*

ROAD RAGE TWIST

IAF officer booked for assaulting biker

CCTV footage shows Shiladitya Bose attacking Vikas Kumar despite his wife's attempts to restrain him ***PHOTO: SALAR***

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

An FIR has been registered against Indian Air Force Wing Commander Shiladitya Bose in the road rage incident that took place on Monday in CV Raman Nagar.

Meanwhile, pro-Kannada organisation protested outside the Byappanahalli Police Station in Bengaluru demanding action against the officer.

The 40-year-old officer has been booked for attempt to murder, criminal intimidation, and voluntarily causing hurt, following a counter-complaint by the biker, who is call centre employee, police said on Tuesday.

The officer had earlier alleged he was attacked and verbally abused by a group of Kannada-speaking individuals after being chased on a bike. However, police investigations, including CCTV footage, indicated that the altercation was triggered when the IAF officer's car, driven by his wife—Squadron Leader Madhumita Dutta—grazed a two-wheeler.

The biker, identified as Vikas Kumar, a team lead at a software company's call centre, was arrested based on a complaint filed by Madhumita. CCTV footage shows a heated confrontation, during which Bose was seen physically attacking Kumar, despite his wife's attempts to restrain him. Home Minister G Parameshwara confirmed that an FIR had been registered against Bose, but noted that he had left for West Bengal following the incident. —Salar News

Rights come with responsibilities: Cops on social media use

City Police Commissioner B Dayananda has urged citizens to exercise their rights on social media with a sense of civic responsibility, especially in matters involving public disturbances. Stressing that misinformation can rapidly escalate into law and order issues, he appealed for responsible digital conduct. "You have the right to post videos or raise concerns online, but unless the matter is reported to the police, we cannot act," Dayananda said. "Uploading a video is not the same as filing an FIR. Delays in reporting leads to delays in justice." The appeal follows a recent road rage incident involving an IAF officer, which went viral before being formally reported. Dayananda cautioned the public against spreading misleading or inflammatory content, particularly on sensitive topics related to language, religion, or community. "Content must be factual, authentic and truthful, he said.

POST OFFICE DELIVERS MANGO

Chief Postmaster General S Rajendra Kumar launched a mango home delivery service in Bengaluru on Tuesday, in collaboration with the Postal Department and Karnataka Mango Development Corporation. Customers can order mangoes online, and deliveries from farmers are made directly to doorsteps ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

HC RESERVES BAIL PLEAS OF RANYA RAO, CO-ACCUSED

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

The State High Court on Tuesday reserved its decision on the bail applications filed by Kannada actress Ranya Rao and co-accused Tarun Konduru Raju in connection with a gold smuggling case.

The case stems from a Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) operation at Kempegowda international airport on 3 March, during which gold bars worth Rs 12.56 crore were seized from Ranya Rao.

Both Rao and Raju are facing serious charges under multiple sections of the Customs Act. Senior Advocate Sandesh Chouta, representing Rao, argued that the DRI did not follow proper procedures during the search and seizure.

He pointed to non-compliance with Section 102 of the Customs Act, which mandates that a person being searched has the right to be taken before a magistrate or a senior customs officer.

The counsel also highlighted irregularities in the search documents and claimed that the officer who conducted the search and made the arrest falsely claimed to be a gazetted officer. Chouta further alleged that Rao's family wasn't properly informed about her arrest.

He also noted that since the alleged offence is compoundable and punishable with less than seven years in prison, it is common for bail to be granted. He requested leniency on grounds that Rao is a woman.

Raju's lawyer argued that his client is being wrongly implicated just because of his business association with Rao — *PTI*

'Ex-DGP's wife Googled murder methods'

Pallavi began plotting Om Prakash's murder nearly three months ago ***PHOTO: SALAR***

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

Pallavi, the wife of retired Director General of Police (DGP) Om Prakash, who was arrested for his murder, had reportedly searched online for ways to kill a human weeks before the crime, police said.

Meanwhile, in WhatsApp messages sent to journalists, Pallavi claimed that she had been held hostage and poisoned by her husband.

According to police, Pallavi began plotting the murder nearly three months ago. As part of her preparation, she repeatedly searched Google and watched YouTube videos on topics such as "how to kill a human," "how to sever blood vessels," "how chilli powder affects the eyes," and "how to stab the chest to cause maximum damage." She also looked up how to stage a murder and what precautions to take.

On Sunday, she invited her husband to lunch and allegedly attacked him mid-meal, throwing chilli powder in his face, stabbing him, and even pouring hot cooking oil on him.

To prevent his escape, Pallavi had allegedly taken several precautions beforehand. Police also suspect that the couple's daughter, Krithi, may have aided her mother.

The WhatsApp messages revealed that Pallavi felt trapped and persecuted long before the alleged murder. In several of the messages, she claimed continued abuse and poisoning attempts.

"I am a hostage. Always under surveillance by Om Prakash's agents wherever I go," she wrote. "I have been asking him to live separately for years, but to no avail. Wherever I go on my own, the same food and water poisoning starts. My daughter is suffering badly now," she added.

— *Salar News with Agencies*

PROTEST AGAINST TRANSFERS

Advocates in Bengaluru protested on Tuesday against the Supreme Court's proposal for the sudden transfer of Karnataka High Court judges ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

STATE'S ORIGINAL CASTE REPORT 'MISSING': BJP

BENGALURU/ MANDYA, 22 APRIL

Alleging that the original caste census report prepared by the state government is missing, the opposition BJP in State on Tuesday claimed that it was currently with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The BJP along with some ruling party MLAs raised concerns over the alleged shortcomings in the original socio-economic and educational survey report, also referred to as the caste census report.

Referring to the letter written to the government by former chairperson of the State Backward Commission K Jayaprakash Hegde stating that the original copy of the caste census report was not available, Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly R Ashoka had alleged that the entire report was "bogus" and called for a judicial probe into it.

He further alleged that the original report is with the CM and cited the purported letter written by Hegde on 5 October, 2021 to the Principal Secretary in the Backward Class Welfare Department. —*PTI*

HC upholds Siddaramaiah's Varuna election win

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday dismissed an election petition challenging the legitimacy of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's victory in the 2023 state elections from the Varuna assembly constituency.

The petition, filed by KM Shankar, a resident of Koodanahalli village in Varuna Hobli, Mysuru, sought to annul Siddaramaiah's election, citing alleged electoral malpractice. Shankar claimed that the Congress party's guarantee card schemes, which promised various welfare benefits, were a form of inducement intended to influence voters illegally. He argued that these promises amounted to bribery. Shankar contended that the guarantee schemes were gifts or promises made with CM's consent. In the 2023 elections, Siddaramaiah secured a decisive victory with 119,816 votes, defeating BJP candidate V Somanna, who garnered 73,653 votes. —PTI

BETTING VIA CHIPS

Cops crack down on IPL betting in City

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

In a major crackdown amid IPL T20 season, Bengaluru City Crime Branch (CCB) arrested 12 individuals for illegal betting and black-market ticket sales on Tuesday. The coordinated raids across the City have uncovered a widespread syndicate operating around IPL matches.

Acting on a tip-off, CCB police raided Cubbon Park where two suspects were caught selling cricket tickets worth Rs 13,000 for Rs 32,000, and tickets priced at Rs 1,500 for Rs 12,500. Police seized Rs 1.55 lakh in cash, several mobile phones, and froze Rs 2.5 lakh in related bank accounts.

The biggest haul came from Basaveshwaranagar, where Rs 71 lakh worth of betting chips were seized ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Further investigations led to the seizure of betting chips—also known as reward points—worth over Rs 2 crore, alongside more than 50 illegal IPL tickets.

In Cubbon Park, two individuals were arrested—one with betting chips valued at Rs 10.27 lakh and Rs 40,177 in bank accounts, and another with Rs 13.85 lakh in linked bank holdings.

In Jeevan Bima Nagar, police found Rs 39,800 in cash, Rs 68 lakh in bank accounts, and Rs 2.43 lakh worth of betting chips. In Yelahanka, a suspect had Rs 3.69 lakh in accounts and chips worth Rs 7.2 lakh.

The biggest haul came from Basaveshwaranagar, where Rs 71 lakh worth of betting chips were seized. Near the stadium, another suspect was nabbed with chips valued at Rs 42.91 lakh and Rs 1.49 lakh in cash. Multiple FIRs have been registered. —*Salar News*

RV College, Chitrakala Parishath get bomb threats

BENGALURU, 22 APRIL

Panic gripped RV College of Engineering (RVCE) and Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath on Tuesday after both institutions received hoax bomb threat emails late Monday night. The emails, sent from the ID sindaarrajput@gmail.com, warned: "Save ur students and principal life from bomb blast."

Staff discovered the threatening messages while checking routine communication early Tuesday morning and alerted the authorities. Bomb disposal squads and sniffer dogs were swiftly deployed to both campuses, and students and staff were safely evacuated. After searches, police confirmed the threats were false. FIRs have been registered at Kengeri and Sheshadripuram police stations. Cybercrime teams have joined the probe to trace the source of the email and check for connections to previous hoax threats. Bengaluru has seen a series of such incidents in recent years.Police are also revisiting a 2016 case in which two MTech students were arrested for sending bomb threats to RVCE, suspecting a similar or copycat motive in the latest incident. —*Salar News*

Maharashtra stays order on Hindi imposing law

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

The Maharashtra government has stayed its order to make Hindi mandatory as a third language for students of Classes one to five in Marathi and English-medium schools, state School Education Minister Dada Bhuse said on Tuesday. A fresh government resolution (GR) would be issued in this matter, he said. The government decision taken last week to make Hindi compulsory as a third language for students of Classes one to five in Marathi and English-medium schools in state had met with stiff resistance from different quarters, including some opposition parties. The move comes days after Maharashtra government's language consultation committee urged Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to revoke the decision. *—PTI*

MHA lowers Atishi's cover to Y category

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has directed Delhi Police to downgrade the security cover provided to former Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi from Z to Y category, sources said on Tuesday. The decision comes following a review of Atishi's threat perception by Central security agencies, which concluded that there was no fresh or significant threat that warranted the continuation of Z category security cover, an official said. A police source said the directive was issued recently after Delhi Police's security unit sought guidance from the MHA. It had earlier flagged the security status of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, currently under Z-plus category, asking if it should be continued. Under the Y category security protocol, Atishi will be guarded by a team of around 12 personnel, including two commandos from Delhi Police. *—PTI*

Called by Centre, Manipur Speaker flies to Delhi

IMPHAL, 22 APRIL

Manipur's Legislative Assembly Speaker, Thokchom Satyabrata, departed for Delhi on Tuesday afternoon after being summoned by central government officials. Sources within state BJP suggest that Satyabrata is a leading contender for the Chief Ministerial position in the troubled state, currently under President's Rule. Following the resignation of chief minister Biren Singh on 9 February, Satyabrata has been engaged in closed-door discussions with BJP North East in-charge, Sambit Patra, in Imphal. Since May 2023, ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities have resulted in over 250 fatalities and left thousands displaced. President's Rule was imposed in Manipur on 13 February, with the state assembly suspended until further notice. *—PTI*

Scribe: Kangana's 'Emergency' fabricating facts

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Kangana Ranaut's film "Emergency" has come under fire again as journalist Coomi Kapoor accused the production company, Manikarnika Films, and Netflix of deliberately misrepresenting facts and improperly exploiting her name. Kapoor, whose book "The Emergency: A Personal History" inspired the film, claims that an agreement concerning its adaptation was violated, including clauses prohibiting alteration of historical facts and the use of her name for promotional purposes without consent. Kapoor highlighted discrepancies, such as the portrayal of former prime minister Indira Gandhi's actions during the Emergency declared in 1975. Despite two legal notices sent to Kapoor, he reports no response and demands compensation. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being received by Saudi Arabia's Minister of Commerce Majid bin Abdullah Al Kassabi and other dignitaries upon his arrival in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

India eyes energy & space deal with Saudi

He is likely to ask Saudi to raise Hajj quota

JEDDAH, 22 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Jeddah on Tuesday for a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia, aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation and strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations. He was received at King Abdulaziz International Airport by Prince Saud bin Mishaal bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Makkah Region, and Majid Al-Kassabi, the Saudi Minister of Commerce.

This is Modi's third visit to the Kingdom and his first to the historic city of Jeddah. During the visit, he is expected to hold high-level talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who also serves as the Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia. Both leaders will co-chair the second meeting of the Strategic Partnership Council, which was established in 2019 to bolster ties across various sectors.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aircraft being escorted by F15 planes of the Royal Saudi Air Force in the Saudi airspace **PHOTO: PTI**

At least six Memoranda of Understanding are expected to be signed in key areas such as space, energy, health, scientific research, culture, and advanced technology. Two leaders will also discuss issues related to annual Hajj pilgrimage, including increasing India's quota.

Ahead of his visit, Modi described Saudi Arabia as "one of India's most valued partners, a trusted friend, and a strategic ally" in an interview with Arab News. He also called the Crown Prince "my brother" and praised Kingdom as a "force of positivity and stability" in the region. Upon arriving at Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Jeddah, Modi was given warm welcome by Indian diaspora. Popular Saudi singer Hashim Abbas greeted him with patriotic song "Ae Watan Mere Aabad Rahe Tu", to which Modi responded with claps and smiles.

On Wednesday, Modi will visit a factory employing Indian workers. Saudi Arabia is home to 2.7 million Indians, making it a crucial pillar of India's diaspora engagement. *—PTI*

India & US have finalised trade deal terms, says Vance

JAIPUR, 22 APRIL

In a significant development amidst apprehensions regarding Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs, US Vice-President JD Vance has announced that the United States and India have finalised terms for a trade agreement.

Speaking in Jaipur on Tuesday, following his meeting with PM Narendra Modi, Vance stressed the importance of partnerships based on fairness and shared national interests. "We seek collaborators who respect their workers and do not undermine wages to enhance exports," he remarked. He articulated a vision for a balanced and fair global trade system and emphasized the need for common goals between the US and its trade partners.

Vance noted that President Trump and PM Modi aim to more than double bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by the decade's end. He highlighted that both governments are diligently working on a trade agreement focused on creating new jobs, establishing robust supply chains, and securing prosperity for workers.

US Vice President JD Vance, Second Lady Usha Vance and their children with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari **PHOTO: PTI**

Vance announced the formal completion of terms of reference for the trade negotiations, stating this is a crucial step towards fulfilling leaders' vision and establishing a roadmap for a final deal. *—PTI*

Parl above all institutions: Dhankar hits out at SC again

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said that every word spoken by a constitutional authority is guided by supreme national interest, as he hit out at his critics for questioning his remarks on a recent Supreme Court order.

Addressing a Delhi University event, Dhankhar said efforts of forces working against the country to tarnish and run down institutions should be neutralised, "be it that of the presidency".

Dhankhar said, "There is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament. Parliament is supreme... Let me tell you, it is as supreme as every individual in the country." An SC bench recently prescribed a three-month timeline for the President of India to decide on Bills reserved by governors for her nod. Dhankhar said the judiciary cannot play the role of a "super Parliament" and get into the domain of the executive. "I find it conceivably intriguing that some have recently reflected that constitutional offices can be ceremonial or ornamental. Nothing can be far distanced from a wrong understanding of the role of everyone in this country – constitutional functionary or a citizen," he said.

Jagdeep Dhankhar **PHOTO: PTI**

"The soul of democracy resides and pulsates in every citizen. Democracy will blossom. Its values will get heightened. When citizen is alert, citizen contributes and what a citizen contributes, there is no substitute for that," he said. *—PTI*

> **The law: Neither Parliament nor the Executive is supreme, the Constitution is supreme. The provisions of the Constitution are interpreted by the Supreme Court. That's how this country has understood the law so far!**
>
> -Kapil Sibal, Rajya Sabha MP

DUBEY REMARK: SC TO HEAR PLEA NEXT WEEK

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to hear next week a plea which flagged BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's recent criticism of the apex court and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, and sought removal of derogatory videos from social media platforms.

The matter was mentioned for urgent listing before a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih.

The counsel quoted Dubey as saying that the CJI was responsible for "civil wars" in the country, and after the video of his remarks went viral, derogatory phrases were being used on social media for the top court. *—PTI*

PAWAR DISMISSES REUNION TALK WITH AJIT

PUNE, 22 APRIL

NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar has dismissed speculation about a political reunion with his estranged nephew and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, following their recent meetings. Speaking in Baramati, Pawar said there was nothing unusual about engaging with government representatives on matters concerning public.

The veteran leader expressed concern over the ongoing water scarcity in Maharashtra and advised careful water usage in the coming months. His comments came after he and Ajit Pawar appeared together at an event in Pune, discussing the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agriculture and the sugar industry.

Sharad Pawar clarified that the meeting focused on enhancing sugarcane production through technology, stating, 'Working in silos isn't feasible; the government's involvement is essential.'

He also refrained from commenting on the potential reconciliation between Uddhav and Raj Thackeray, calling it a personal family matter. *—PTI*

TN Guv invites VP Dhankar to V-Cs' meet

CHENNAI, 22 APRIL

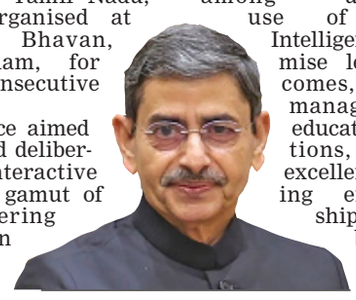
Amidst frosty ties with the ruling DMK dispensation and against the backdrop of the Supreme Court ruling in favour of the Tamil Nadu government, Governor RN Ravi has convened a meeting of Vice Chancellors of state universities, choosing to invite Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar for the inaugural session in the alluring hilly Nilgiris district for the weekend.

The meeting scheduled for 25 and 26 April has already triggered a negative response from the political parties in Tamil Nadu, particularly the Left, which has appealed to the V-Cs to boycott the meeting.

A source said the Vice President is scheduled to address the V-Cs during the inauguration and attending various other programmes.

According to a communique from the Raj Bhavan here, the annual conference of the Vice Chancellors of state, central and private universities/institutions of Tamil Nadu, was being organised at the Raj Bhavan, Udhagamandalam, for the fourth consecutive year.

The conference aimed to have detailed deliberation and interactive sessions on a gamut of issues covering implementation of national credit framework, academic collaborations among universities, use of Artificial Intelligence to maximise learning outcomes, financial management in educational institutions, research excellence, promoting entrepreneurship and capacity building for learners. *—PTI*



SC to consider Kerala's pleas against Guv

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would examine whether the recent judgement on a plea of Tamil Nadu, fixing timelines for the grant of assent to bills, covered the issues raised by the Kerala government in its pleas. A bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi agreed to hear on 6 May the pleas of the Kerala government against governor over the delay in approving bills passed by the state assembly. *—PTI*

M'rashtra govt spending Rs 150 cr on Cabinet meet: Cong

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Maharashtra Congress President Harshvardhan Sapkal has accused the ruling Mahayuti coalition of planning to spend a staggering Rs 150 crore on arrangements for an upcoming cabinet meeting in Ahilyanagar district. The BJP-led government, however, claimed the figure was an error, and the actual amount was Rs 1.5 crore.

In a post on X, Sapkal shared a tender notice stating Rs 150 crore would be spent on temporary structures, staging, green rooms, toilets, barricading, air-conditioning, electricity, fire services, and CCTV for the 29, April meeting in Chondi. Sapkal criticised the government for claiming financial hardship while allegedly splurging on events. He highlighted that schemes like the pilgrimage programme for senior citizens had been discontinued, and promises like increased allowances under the Ladki Bahin Yojana and farm loan waivers remained unfulfilled.

In response, State Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule called Sapkal's remarks 'childish', stating that a newspaper had mistakenly printed Rs 150 crore instead of the sanctioned Rs 1.5 crore.

The Public Works Department confirmed the correct amount. *—PTI*

DIDI BLAMES OUTSIDERS FOR WAQF VIOLENCE

KOLKATA, 22 APRIL

Violence in Murshidabad over the anti-Waqf (Amendment) Act, which left three people dead—including a father and son—and led to over 280 arrests, has sparked political tension and protests across West Bengal.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condemned unrest, blaming "outsiders" for instigating riots. Speaking at an event in Midnapore, she vowed to uncover the conspiracy behind the violence and announced Rs 10 lakh compensation and home reconstruction support under the Banglar Bari scheme for the victims' families. Meanwhile, protests erupted in Hooghly's Chinsurah, where BJP supporters clashed with police during a demonstration led by state BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar.

The protest highlighted both Murshidabad violence and the Supreme Court's decision to cancel 26,000 teaching and non-teaching staff appointments due to the recruitment irregularities. *—PTI*

BATTLE OF THE TOTES

BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj carries a tote bag with 'National Herald Ki Loot' printed on it, while attending the Joint Parliamentary Committee meeting on 'One Nation, One Election', on Tuesday. She took an apparent dig at Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who had earlier made a statement with her 'Palestine' bag during Parliament's Winter session **PHOTO: PTI**

RAMBAN FLASH FLOOD

Locals stop Omar's convoy over poor handling of landslide

RAMBAN, 22 APRIL

Angry residents in Ramban on Tuesday halted Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's convoy during his visit to the landslide hit district, to inform him about the slow relief efforts.

Abdullah stepped out of his vehicle to appease the locals, while assuring them that all necessary relief would be made available to the affected.

Three people died in the natural disaster, which damaged important infrastructure and roads, resulting in the district being cut off for the third consecutive day.

The Chief Minister visited several areas, including Kali Morh, Seri and Ramban market to assess the damage caused by the landslides, mudslides and floods. He also interacted with the affected families, ensuring them of relief and rehabilitation and reviewed the ongoing relief operations in the district.

Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah visits an area affected by landslides and flash flood, in Ramban, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Abdullah said his administration was assessing the damage and making arrangements to provide ration and water to the affected families.

The highway remained closed for the third day.

—Salar News with agencies

Study glass industry impact on Taj: SC

Asks all govt agencies, including the pollution control board, to assist NEERI in the exercise

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to assess the nearby glass industries impacting the Taj Mahal in Uttar Pradesh.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan directed NEERI to file an affidavit indicating the timeline for the assessment's completion.

The top court said all government agencies including the pollution control board should assist NEERI in the exercise.

"We want to know the extent of pollution caused by these industries. If we find that these industries are causing pollution, we won't hesitate to order shifting of these units. Some examination has to be made about the extent of pollution," the bench said.

The bench then directed the Uttar Pradesh pollution control board to constitute a team for visiting the industries mentioned in the affidavit filed by the state and examine the aspect of pollution from these industries.

"After completing study of five industries, the pollution control board shall submit the interim report so that appropriate directions can be issued," the top court added.

The top court had previously deplored the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) authority on environment protection in and around the Taj Mahal asking it whether the preservation of the iconic monument was a "tamasha" (drama) or a "joke.

TTZ is an area of about 10,400sq km spread over the districts of Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, Hathras and Etah in Uttar Pradesh and Bharatpur district of Rajasthan.

The apex court has criticised the Taj Trapezium Zone authority, asking whether the preservation of the iconic monument was a 'joke' **PHOTO: PTI**

The apex court has been monitoring development in the area to protect the Taj Mahal, built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in the memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal at Agra. —*PTI*

SC FLAGS DELAY IN ACCIDENT RELIEF

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Tuesday found it "disturbing" that road accident victims were deprived of compensation despite orders of the Motor Accident Claims Tribunals (MACT).

Issuing a slew of directions, a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said while filing claim petitions under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, names and addresses of the injured or the owners of the damaged property; their Aadhaar and PAN details and email id, should be submitted.

"If the aforesaid details are not furnished, the registration of the application should not be refused on that ground, but MAC tribunals at the time of issuing notice may direct the applicant(s) to furnish the information and make the issue of the notice subject to making compliance," it said. The order came on a suo motu petition over large sums lying with the MACT and labour courts. —*PTI*

Rains devastate Tripura, damage over 400 houses

AGARTALA, 22 APRIL

Heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms, has wreaked havoc across Tripura, damaging over 400 houses, according to an official statement. The adverse weather, which struck in the early hours of 21 April, led to the destruction of 445 homes, either partially or severely. In addition, electricity supply was disrupted, with 49 power poles reported damaged. Two individuals, identified as Nayan Kumar Tripura, 70, and Rumati Tripura, 39, were injured in Karbook, where their homes collapsed. Fortunately, all major rivers, including the Gomati, Muhuri, and Feni, are currently flowing below flood levels, alleviating immediate concerns of flooding. The situation remains under assessment as recovery efforts begin. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gauhati High Court receives bomb threat via email

GUWAHATI, 22 APRIL

The Gauhati High Court received an email on Tuesday morning, threatening that there would be a blast in the building, police said. "We rushed a team to the high court after getting the threat message. Our experts are checking every corner of the premises, and nothing has been found so far. We believe it is a hoax," a senior police officer said. A senior official of the high court said the email was received from an organisation named Madras Tigers, which threatened to blow up the entire building. "The police are carrying out a search operation. They have brought different equipment to sanitise the building," he said. The official said the threat has not hampered the functioning of the court. —*PTI*

Bizman, wife found murdered in Kottayam

KOTTAYAM, 22 APRIL

A businessman and his wife were murdered in their home in Thiruvathukkal. Police confirmed the shocking incident occurred on Tuesday morning when the couple, identified as Vijayakumar, an auditorium owner, and his wife Meera, were found in a pool of blood. The couple's maid, arriving for her regular duties, discovered the bodies after the back door was found locked. Alerting neighbours, they quickly contacted the authorities. Kottayam Superintendent of Police Shahul Hameed stated that early indications suggest the motive behind the killings is personal rivalry, with no signs of theft at the scene. While investigating, police will look into a recently dismissed migrant worker linked to the couple. Notably, although a security-cum caretaker was present, he only learned of the tragedy when notified by the maid. The couple's daughter lives abroad, said sources. —*PTI*

CRPF jawan dies of electric shock in Chhattisgarh

BIJAPUR, 22 APRIL

A jawan of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) died of electric shock at a camp in Chhattisgarh's Naxalite-hit Bijapur district, police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred on Monday evening at the 195th battalion's camp in the Gangaloor police station area, an official said. "Constable Sujoy Pal was admitted to the community health centre in Gangaloor after he suffered an electric shock. Doctors declared him dead during treatment," he said. He said after post-mortem, the deceased jawan's body was sent to his native place in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The official said the police have registered a case and are investigating the matter. —*PTI*

HC slams delay in rape victims' test

PRAYAGRAJ, 22 APRIL

PHOTO: ANI

The Allahabad High Court has taken serious note of harassment of rape victims due to delays in their medico-legal radiological examination mainly due to the non-availability of radiologists in various districts across UP.

The court emphasised on the need for a proper appointment and transfer policy for government doctors in the state.

The HC questioned disproportionate posting of radiologists in UP. "Concentrating 78 radiologists in a single district like Lucknow, while leaving other districts without even one does raise serious concerns about equitable distribution of medical resources," the court added.

Justice Krishan Pahal made the observations while hearing a bail application of a man accused by the father of a 13-year-old minor girl of abducting and raping her. But the girl that she had gone with the accused on her own will. The girl was later found to be 19-year-old – age of consenting – in ossification test, but due to false averments regarding her age, the man remained in jail for six months.

According to the girl, she can have a relationship with the man as per law and hence, he did not commit any crime.

The court had directed Ballia CMO for ossification test of the girl but due to absence of a radiologist at Ballia she was taken to Varanasi where the health department refused to conduct her test, raising a technical ground that the court had directed state government doctor at Ballia and not Varanasi to conduct the test. —*PTI*

WB teachers to intensify stir; Didi fumes

KOLKATA, 22 APRIL

Thousands of teachers, whose appointments were annulled following a Supreme Court verdict, on Tuesday vowed to intensify their stir, as they continued the overnight protests outside the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) headquarters in Salt Lake.

The agitators were among nearly 26,000 teaching and non-teaching staff whose appointments were invalidated by the apex court on April 3, citing "widespread irregularities" in the 2016 recruitment drive.

Around 2,000 protesters surrounded the WBSSC headquarters, denying entry and exit of officials, including its chairman Siddhartha Majumdar, who has been inside the building since last evening. "We have realised we have nothing more to lose. This agitation will only end with justice – not another promise, not another lie," said one of the protesters.

"We will not let any food item enter the SSC building. If we are forced to starve on the streets under the open sky, those sitting inside air-conditioned rooms should also feel the heat," said another.

Security personnel try to control protesters outside the West Bengal School Service Commission at Salt Lake in Kolkata on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday urged the protesting teachers to return to work, assuring them that her government will protect their salaries.

"You don't need to worry about who is tainted and who is not. You only need to worry about whether you have your job and are getting your salaries. The list to identify the tainted and untainted teachers remains with the government and the courts. We assure that your jobs are safe for now and you will get your salaries. Please return to your schools and resume classes," Banerjee said. —*PTI*

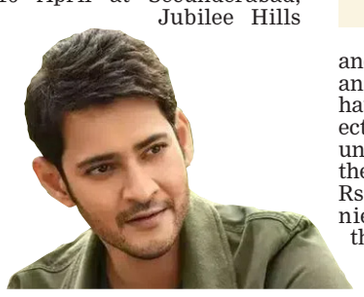
ED summons Telugu actor Mahesh Babu in PMLA case

HYDERABAD, 22 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Telugu actor Mahesh Babu for questioning in a money laundering case linked to an alleged real estate fraud case perpetrated by some local groups, officials said on Tuesday.

The ED has asked Babu, 49, to visit the federal probe agency's office in Hyderabad on 28 April and get his statement recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

The case pertains to Sai Surya Developers, the Surana Group and some others. The ED had conducted searches on 16 April at Secunderabad, Jubilee Hills and Bowenpally. Babu is not an accused at present. He may have endorsed the realty projects of the accused companies unaware of the alleged fraud, they said. The actor received Rs 5.9 crore from the companies as endorsement fee, they said.



The case stems from a complaint against Sathish Chandra Gupta, the proprietor of Sai Surya Developers and Narendra Surana, director of Bhagyanagar Properties Ltd. and others for "defrauding" and "cheating" gullible investors of their hard earned money in the name of advance for sale of plots involving huge amounts. —*PTI*

PUNJAB MAN HELD OVER BOGUS DEATH THREAT TO TIGER SHROFF

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

A 35-year-old Punjab resident has been apprehended for allegedly giving false information to Mumbai police regarding "death threat" to Bollywood actor Tiger Shroff, an official said on Tuesday. According to the Khar police station official, the man, identified as Manish Kumar Sujinder Singh, falsely claimed that a weapon and 'supari' (contract) of Rs 2 lakh were given to some individuals to kill the 35-year-old actor. However, an investigation revealed Singh had given false information to the control room, according to the official. —*PTI*

FIR filed against B'wood director Anurag Kashyap

JAIPUR, 22 APRIL

An FIR was registered against film director Anurag Kashyap at Bajaj Nagar police station in the Rajasthan capital for his remarks on Brahmins on a social media platform, an officer said on Sunday.

According to Bajaj Nagar Sub-Inspector Ram Kripal, the complainant alleged that the director posted abusive words about Brahmins while replying to a social media user.

Kashyap's film 'Phule' had courted controversy over its portrayal of caste. Kashyap had questioned the row surrounding the film and while replying to a social media user, made the contentious remark against the Brahmin community. After being widely trolled for the comment, Kashyap apologised on Saturday. —*PTI*

IIT-Kharagpur student found dead in hostel

KOLKATA, 22 APRIL

IIT-Kharagpur student Aniket Walkar of fourth-year Ocean Engineering and Naval Architecture was found dead in his hostel room on Sunday evening. The 22-year-old from Gondia district of Maharashtra was discovered hanging from the ceiling.

Immediately alerted, campus security and the medical team contacted local police, and Walkar's family was informed. Authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding his death, with the institute pledging its full cooperation. —*PTI*

NEET aspirant found dead in Kota hostel

KOTA, 22 APRIL

An 18-year-old NEET aspirant from Chapra, Bihar reportedly killed himself in his hostel room on Tuesday morning.

The student had been preparing for the NEET-UG exam at a local coaching institute for approximately a year. According to police, a suicide note was discovered in his room stating that neither his family nor his exam preparations were responsible for his decision.

Prior to the tragic incident, the student sent a WhatsApp message to his sister, prompting her to contact the hostel caretaker to check on him. —*PTI*

Former Andhra intel chief held for harassing model

AMARAVATI, 22 APRIL

Andhra Pradesh's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has arrested suspended senior police officer and former intelligence chief PSR Anjaneyulu in Hyderabad over allegations of harassment by Mumbai-based actor and model Kadambari Narendra Kumar Jethwani. This arrest marks a significant development in an ongoing case linked to the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) regime.

PSR Anjaneyulu **PHOTO: PTI**

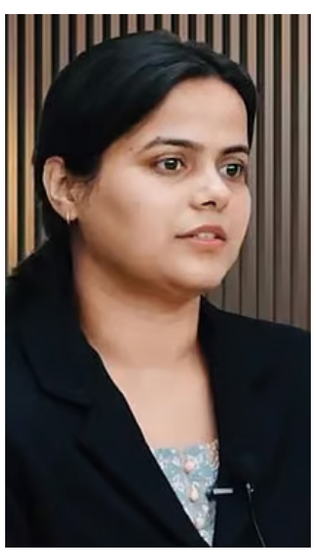
Anjaneyulu is one of three IPS officers currently under suspension for allegedly "hastily arresting" and "harassing" Jethwani without a proper investigation. The other suspended officers are Vishal Gunni and Kanthi Ratan Tata.

While senior police officials have remained tight-lipped about the arrest, the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) claimed Anjaneyulu's apprehension was orchestrated under former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's directive. The TDP stated that the previous government had utilised its machinery to intimidate Jethwani, and asserted that the current government is working to deliver justice to her.

Anjaneyulu, along with former Vijayawada Police Commissioner Tata and Gunni, was suspended last year following an inquiry into their roles in the alleged harassment. The case has already seen the arrest of YSRCP leader Kukkala Vidyasagar. —*PTI*

SHINING STARS

Allahabad's Shakti Dubey tops UPSC exam



Shakti Dubey **PHOTO: X**

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Shakti Dubey, a BSc graduate in biochemistry from the University of Allahabad, has topped the civil services examination 2024, results of which were declared by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). She qualified for the examination with political science and international relations as her optional subject.

Harshita Goyal, a BCom graduate from MS University of Baroda, secured the second rank with political science and international relations as her optional subject.

Dongre Archit Parag, who has a BTech degree in electrical and electronics engineering from Vellore Institute of Technology, Vellore stood third with philosophy as his optional subject.

- Harshita Goyal, a BCom graduate from MS University of Baroda, came second, while Dongre Archit Parag, who has a BTech degree in electrical and electronics engineering from Vellore Institute of Technology, stood third

The UPSC conducts the civil services examination annually in three stages to select officers to the Indian administrative service, foreign service and police service among others.

A total of 5,83,213 candidates appeared in the examination, of which 14,627 candidates qualified for the written (main) examination. Of these 2,845 candidates qualified for the interview.

UPSC recommended 1,009 candidates, including 45 persons with benchmark disabilities for appointment to various services.

Shah Margi Chirag and Aakash Garg secured the fourth and fifth rank respectively in the examination. While Chirag holds a BTech degree in computer engineering, Gupta is a B.Tech graduate in computer science.

The top 25 candidates comprise 11 women and 14 men. Their qualifications range from graduation in engineering, humanities, science, commerce, medical science and architecture. They also opted for a wide range of optional subjects in the written examination. —*PTI*

TRIBUTE FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Newspapers around the globe paid tributes to Pope Francis after his death on 21 April, a day after Easter. The Times called him an "Outsider with a mission to change the world," while The Daily Telegraph's headline said "One last Easter blessing." Known for his progressive reforms, Pope Francis approved same-sex marriage in 2020, stating, "Homosexuals have a right to be part of the family. They're children of God." In 2021, he changed Church law to allow women to serve as readers at liturgies and as altar servers

PHOTO: PTI

The last Easter blessing and his work was done
Daily Mail
PASSING OF POPE FRANCIS
After his final blessing on Easter Sunday, the frail Pope dies of a stroke. Now a battle for the Catholic Church's future begins
He's returned to the house of the Father
THE TIMES
'Outsider' with a mission to change the Catholic church
Pope Francis 1936-2025
DAILY EXPRESS
King leads tributes to the Pope who has died aged 88 after final act of Easter devotion
FRANCIS: 1936-2025

Heritage sites see 19% rise in footfall, drop in revenue

India's centrally protected ticketed monuments experienced an over 19 per cent surge in footfall in 2023-24 compared to the pre-pandemic levels but this did not translate into higher revenue from ticket sales, which dropped by 2.83 per cent, official data shows.

An analysis of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) data, presented in the Rajya Sabha, covering 143 monuments shows a complex recovery picture for these key heritage sites, contextualised by broader national trends reported in the Ministry of Tourism's "India Tourism Data Compendium 2024.

The total footfall across these listed monuments increased by 19.35 per cent from approximately 4.60 crore in 2019-20 to 5.49 crore in 2023-24, the data showed.

However, despite the surge in the number of visitors, the combined revenue from ticket sales at these monuments saw a decline of 2.83 per cent during the five-year period, dropping from Rs 312.54 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 303.70 crore in 2023-24.

This suggests a shift in the visitor composition at these sites. A direct comparison of visitor data for centrally protected ticketed monuments between 2019-20 and 2023-24 reveals divergent trends.

While domestic tourist visits surged by 21.75 per cent, from 4.36 crore in 2019-20 to 5.31 crore in 2023-24, foreign tourist visits decreased by 16.03 per cent, from 27.56 lakh in 2019-20 to 23.15 lakh in 2023-24, according to the data.

The increase in the domestic visitor segment, coupled with a decline in the number of higher-paying foreign visitors compared to the pre-pandemic levels, appears to be the primary factor behind the stagnant overall monument revenue despite higher total footfall.

This trend mirrors the national picture, where Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2023 (95.2 lakh) recovered to only about 87 per cent of the 2019 levels.

A direct comparison of visitor data for centrally protected ticketed monuments between 2019-20 and 2023-24 reveals divergent trends

PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS

The resulting lower average revenue per visitor at the monuments, likely stemming from this altered visitor mix and the ASI's differential pricing structure, aligns with the broader national context where Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism overall stood at USD 28.08 billion in 2023, lower than the 2019 peak of USD 30.72 billion.

The broader tourism sector remains a significant economic contributor nationally, with its total (direct + indirect) share estimated to be five per cent of the GDP and supporting 7.62 crore jobs in 2022-23, according to the Tourism Satellite Account data.

Performance varied dramatically across individual monuments.

While sites like Rajarani Temple (301 per cent), Ashokan Rock Edict (251 per cent) and Konark Sun Temple (53.5 per cent) saw massive revenue growth (2023-24 vs 2019-20), others like Tirumalai Nayak's Palace (98.2 per cent), Moovarkoil (90.1 per cent) and Agra Fort (47.2 per cent) saw sharp declines.

These stark differences likely stem from various site-specific factors which could range from restoration activities impacting access, changes in regional tourism promotion and infrastructure, or shifts in popular visitor circuits. Specific reasons for each monument's performance are not detailed in the analysed data.

The performance of iconic monuments underscores the trend.

The Taj Mahal saw the footfall jump by 31.27 per cent but the revenue rose only 1.48 per cent. Qutub Minar's footfall surged by 45.1 per cent and revenue by 18 per cent. Conversely, Humayun's Tomb saw footfall increased by 16.6 per cent while revenue dropped by 29.8 per cent.

According to the 'India Tourism Data Compendium 2024', the Taj Mahal was the most popular among visitors in 2023-24 with 61 lakh domestic and 6.8 lakh foreign tourists.

Konark Sun Temple (32 lakh) and Qutub Minar (31.2 lakh) were the next most popular among domestic tourists. For foreign visitors, it was Qutub Minar (2.2 lakh) and Agra Fort (2.18 lakh).

Visitor numbers, however, did not directly correlate with revenue generation.

The highest revenue earners among these monuments in 2023-24 were Taj Mahal (Rs 98.55 crore), Qutub Minar (Rs 23.80 crore), Red Fort (Rs 18.09 crore), Agra Fort (Rs 15.27 crore) and Konark Sun Temple (Rs 12.66 crore), according to ASI data.

The data specific to India's protected monuments paints a picture of resilient visitor appeal, particularly drawing huge numbers of domestic travellers post-pandemic.

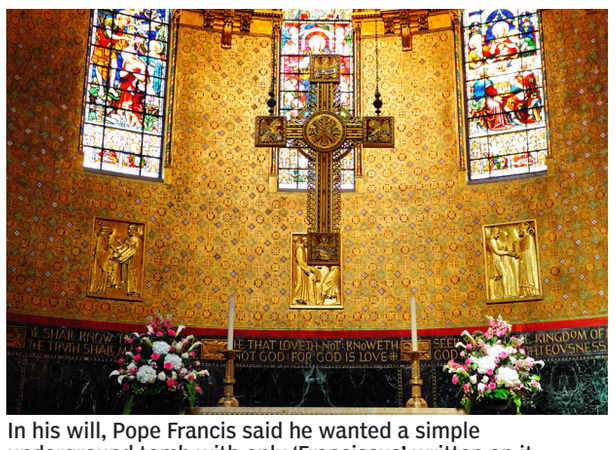
However, the financial recovery at these sites, measured by ticket revenue, still lags behind pre-pandemic benchmarks, reflecting the significant impact of the reduced number of foreign visitors compared to 2019 and the overall altered tourism landscape. *—PTI*

SALAR

'Conclave' to 'Scrutineers': Terms in papal transition

A change in popes — through death or resignation — is a complicated process, with centuries-old rituals involving the transition in leadership for both the spiritual head of the global Catholic Church and the Vatican's head of state.

These are the need-to-know terms — some of them in Latin — to help make sense of news in the coming days.



In his will, Pope Francis said he wanted a simple underground tomb with only 'Franciscus' written on it

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Vatican camerlengo
This is the "chamberlain" — the cardinal in charge of formally verifying the pope's death — and then sealing his room and study. Between then and the election of the new pope, the camerlengo administers the "goods and temporal rights" of the Holy See.

College of Cardinals
There are 252 cardinals worldwide, and as a body, they are in charge of the Holy See's affairs in-between popes, albeit with limits. Of them, 135 are "cardinal electors," who gather in the Vatican to choose the new pope.

Conclave
This is the closed-door meeting of the cardinal electors to choose the new pope in the Sistine Chapel. Its name, literally "with a key," was used in the 13th century to describe the process of locking up the cardinals until the election is completed. It must begin no more than 20 days after the death or resignation of a pope.

Dean of the College of Cardinals
The current dean is Italian Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re. He is the head of the College of Cardinals who informs the rest of the cardinals and the ambassadors to the Holy See of the pope's death once he learns of it from the camerlengo. He convenes the conclave and presides as the electors take their oaths.

Domus Santa Marta
This Vatican guesthouse, built in 1996, specifically houses cardinals during a conclave and is used at other times as a hotel for visiting priests and Vatican officials. Pope Francis never moved out after he was elected pope, choosing to live in suite 201, rather than the papal apartments in the Apostolic Palace.

Extra omnes'
A Latin phrase for "all out," it's spoken by the master for papal liturgical celebrations, currently Italian Archbishop Diego Ravelli, to ask all those present except the cardinal electors to leave the Sistine Chapel to begin the voting process during the conclave.

Fisherman's ring
Each pope gets this ring at the Mass marking the beginning of his pontificate. It bears this name because Jesus told St Peter, the first pope, that he would be "a fisher of men." Until the 1990s, it was destroyed upon a pope's death. Now, it's "annulled," or marked in such a way that it can't be used as a seal.

General Congregations
This is the name given to the gathering of all members of the College of Cardinals after the pope's death and before the start of the conclave to discuss major church affairs. All cardinals who aren't infirm take part in this meeting in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace.

Habemus Papam'
This Latin phrase translates to "We have a pope." These are the words used by the "protodeacon" of the College of Cardinals to announce from the loggia of St Peter's Basilica that a new pope has been elected. He then says the new pope's birth name and the name he has chosen to use as pope, also in Latin.

Miserando atque eligendo'
This is Latin for "having had mercy and choosing him" — a phrase that Francis chose as his motto when he was elevated to bishop and kept as his papal seal.

Rogito
This is the document, or "deed," listing key details of the pope's life and papacy that is placed in his coffin. It's written in Latin by the master for papal liturgical celebrations. A copy is kept in the Vatican archives.

Sede vacante'
This is Latin for "vacant seat," the period between the pope's death or resignation and the election of a new one.

Scrutineers
These are the three cardinals, chosen by random drawing from the electors, who are charged with reviewing each ballot and announcing it to the assembled conclave after each round of voting.

St. Mary Major
This is the basilica in Rome where Pope Francis said he wants to be buried. Francis is breaking with the tradition of his predecessors who are buried inside the Vatican, saying he wanted to be near his favorite icon of the Virgin Mary, the Salus Populi Romani, a Byzantine-style painting of the Madonna draped in a blue robe, holding the infant Jesus who in turn is holding a jeweled golden book. In his will, Francis said he wanted a simple underground tomb with only "Franciscus" written on it.

Universi Dominici Gregis'
This Latin phrase means "the Lord's whole flock." It's the Vatican constitution that regulates the processes from a pope's death until a new one is elected. St John Paul II issued it in 1996 during his papacy, and Pope Benedict XVI twice amended it, most significantly by removing John Paul's provision that after about 12 days of balloting a simple majority could elect a new pope rather than a two-thirds majority. If the conclave lasts that long, the top two vote-getters go to a runoff, with a two-thirds majority required to win.

What does white or black smoke mean during a papal transition?
After each round of voting in the Sistine Chapel, the ballots are burned in a special furnace to indicate the outcome to the outside world. If no pope is chosen, the ballots are mixed with cartridges containing potassium perchlorate, anthracene (a component of coal tar), and sulfur to produce black smoke. But if there is a winner, the burning ballots are mixed with potassium chlorate, lactose and chloroform resin to produce the white smoke. Bells also are rung to further signal there is a new pope. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

70% of Holocaust survivors will be gone in the next 10 years

Eighty years after the Holocaust, more than 2,00,000 Jewish survivors are still alive but 70 per cent of them will be gone within the next 10 years — meaning time is running out to hear the voices of the last generation who suffered through one of the worst atrocities in history.

Currently, the survivors' median age is 87, and more than 1,400 of them are over 100 years old, a new report said Tuesday.

"We have known that this population of survivors would be the last, our final opportunity to hear their first-hand testimonies, to spend time with them, our last chance to meet a survivor," said Greg Schneider, the executive vice president of the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, also referred to as the Claims Conference, which published the study.

The report's analysis of population projections and mortality rates provides details through 2040.

It is based on the extensive data collected since 1952 by the Claims Conference, which includes survivors who receive direct payments or social welfare services funded by the organisation as a result of ongoing negotiations with Germany.

90 per cent of Holocaust survivors will pass away in the next 15 years.

Notably, nearly 50 per cent of all Holocaust survivors will pass away within the next six years, while 70 per cent will die within 10 years and 90 per cent within 15 years, according to the report titled "Vanishing Witnesses."

Those still alive are often of frail health and suffer from ailments that come with age and have been amplified by traumas in their youth.

Six million European Jews were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust.

It is not clear exactly how many Jews survived the death camps, the ghettos or somewhere in hiding across Nazi-occupied Europe, but their numbers were a far cry from the pre-war Jewish population in Europe.

In Poland, of the 3.3 million Jews living there in 1939, only about 3,00,000 survived.

Around 5,60,000 Jews lived in Germany in 1933, the year Adolf Hitler came to power. After the Holocaust, their numbers had diminished to about 15,000 through emigration and extermination.

After the end of World War II, survivors settled all over the globe and even today they are still living in 90 different countries.

Currently, the survivors' median age is 87, and more than 1,400 of them are over 100 years old, a new report said

PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS

Mortality rates vary across locations

The "Vanishing Witnesses" report shows that mortality rates for survivors vary greatly across locations depending on access to health care and economic stability.

For example, Israel, which is home to about half of all Holocaust survivors, had 1,10,100 survivors as of October 2024 and is estimated to see their population decline to 62,900 by 2030, a drop of 43 per cent.

JEWISH SURVIVORS

- 90 per cent of Holocaust survivors will pass away in the next 15 years.
- Those still alive are often of frail health and suffer from ailments that come with age and have been amplified by traumas in their youth.
- Mortality rates vary across locations
- Six million European Jews were murdered by the Nazis

The United States had 34,600 in the fall of 2024, but is projected to lose 39 per cent over that same time, dropping to 21,100 survivors.

Countries in the former Soviet Union had 25,500 survivors in October 2024, but are expected to be at 11,800 in five years, down 54 per cent by the start of 2030.

"This report is a stark reminder that our time is almost up, our survivors are leaving us and this is the moment to hear their voices," said Gideon Taylor, the president of the Claims Conference.

Many survivors worry who will keep alive their memories

Albrecht Weinberg, a 100-year-old survivor from Germany who lost almost his entire family in the Holocaust, said that even today the horrendous memories are haunting him. "I sleep with it, I wake up with it, I sweat, I have nightmares; that is my present."

Weinberg survived the concentration and death camps Auschwitz, Mittelbau-Dora, Bergen-Belsen and three death marches at the end of the war. He spent many years teaching high school students and others about the atrocities he had to live through.

Still, he worries what will happen when he is no longer around to bear witness.

"When my generation is not in this world anymore, when we disappear from the world, then the next generation can only read it out of the book." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

14 Palestinians killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, 22 APRIL

Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip killed at least 14 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and destroyed bulldozers and other heavy equipment supplied by mediators to clear rubble. Besides, separate strikes on Tuesday killed two people in Lebanon. Israel's 18-month offensive against Hamas has destroyed vast areas of Gaza, raising fears that much of it may never be rebuilt. The territory already had a shortage of heavy equipment, which is also needed to rescue people from the rubble after Israeli strikes and to clear vital roads. A municipality in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza said a strike on its parking garage destroyed nine bulldozers provided by Egypt and Qatar, which helped broker the ceasefire that took hold in January. *—PTI*

NYIFF to honour Shyam Benegal at silver jubilee

NEW YORK, 22 APRIL

The 2025 New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) will celebrate its 25th anniversary from 20–22 June, honouring legendary filmmaker Shyam Benegal, who passed away in December 2024. A 4K restoration of his iconic film Manthan will be screened. The festival also pays tribute to Oscar-winner James Ivory with An Arrested Moment, directed by Dev Benegal. Opening with The Fable starring Manoj Bajpayee, the line-up features 22 feature films and 21 shorts in over a dozen Indian languages. Highlights include Anurag Kashyap's Kennedy, Nawazuddin Siddiqui's I'm Not An Actor, and Rasika Dugal's Little Thomas. Documentaries such as Marching in the Dark and A Fly on the Wall reflect bold storytelling. *—PTI*

Christian among 5 held in Pakistan on blasphemy charge

LAHORE, 22 APRIL

Five persons, including a Christian, have been arrested on the charges of blasphemy in Pakistan's Punjab province, police said on Tuesday. A law-and-order situation was created after a large number of people surrounded the Sajid Shaheed Police Station in Sargodha city on Sunday, forcing the police to arrest the five suspects for insulting a companion of the Prophet, police said. "Complainant Nisar Ahmad alleged that Naeem, Yasir, Zain, Hanif and Sameul printed stickers containing blasphemous content," said police officer Mobin Ali. Police controlled the situation and later arrested the culprits, he said, adding that the suspects have been produced before a magistrate. *—PTI*

16 killed as van plunges into ravine in Pakistan

KARACHI, 22 APRIL

At least 16 people, including women and children, were killed and 30 others injured when a van plunged into a ravine Sindh province of Pakistan, on Monday. The van, carrying members of the Kolhi tribe, was travelling from Lapari in Punjab to Badin in Sindh after the group had completed wheat harvesting in Balochistan. Authorities said the driver lost control in the hilly region due to speeding, causing the van to fall into a deep ditch. Emergency services responded promptly, transporting the deceased and injured to a nearby hospital. According to Deputy Commissioner Ghazanfar Qadri, several of the injured remain in critical condition, and the death toll may rise. Pakistan has one of the world's worst road safety records, often due to poor roads, unmaintained vehicles, and reckless driving. *—PTI*

Cardinal Camerlengo Kevin Joseph Farrell, flanked by Master of Ceremonies Archbishop Diego Giovanni Ravelli on his left and Master of Ceremonies Lubomir Welnitz on his right, performs the ceremonial aspersion of the body of Pope Francis with holy water as part of the final rites inside his private chapel at the Vatican on Monday. Faithful gather for a rosary prayer for the late Pope in St Peter's Square at the Vatican ***PHOTOS: PTI***

Cardinals choose Saturday for Pope's funeral

Meet at synod hall to chart the next steps before a conclave to choose Francis' successor

VATICAN CITY, 22 APRIL

Cardinals have set Saturday as the date for his funeral and allowing ordinary faithful to begin paying their final respects starting Wednesday, when his casket is brought into St. Peter's Basilica.

The cardinals met for the first time Tuesday in the Vatican's synod hall to chart the next steps before a conclave begins to choose Francis' successor, as condolences poured in from around the world grieving history's first Latin American pope.

The cardinals set the funeral for Saturday at 10 am in St. Peter's Square, to be celebrated by the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re.

US President Donald Trump has announced he and first lady Melania Trump plan to attend Saturday's funeral Argentine President Javier Milei is also expected.

"He gave himself to the end," said Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, the head of the Italian bishops' conference and considered a possible contender to be next pope.

Tributes across the world has been pouring in. "He was a pope who didn't change his path when it came to getting dirty," Francis' vicar for Rome, Cardinal Baldassarre Reina, said in a Mass in his honour. "For him, poor people and migrants were the sacrament of Jesus."

"He challenged the powerful to act with justice, called nations to welcome the stranger, and reminded us that our common home - this Earth - is a gift we must protect for future generations," said Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, who is Muslim.

In his final will, Francis requested a modest burial at St Mary Major basilica outside the Vatican, home to his favourite icon of Virgin Mary. Before and after every foreign trip, he would go there to pray before the Byzantine-style painting of Mary draped in a blue robe, holding the infant Jesus, who in turn holds a jewelled golden book.

Francis who was recovering from pneumonia, died Monday at age 88 after suffering a stroke that put him in a coma and led his heart to fail. *—PTI*

Russian drones targeted residential buildings in a densely populated urban area, civilian infrastructure and an educational facility ***PHOTO: X***

Russia pounds Odesa, day before peace talks

KYIV, 22 APRIL

Russian drones battered the Ukrainian port city of Odesa in a nighttime attack, injuring atleast 3 local authorities said Tuesday, just over a day before Ukrainian, British, French and US officials are due to meet in London to discuss the war.

Less than a day after the purported ceasefire declared unilaterally by Moscow ended, Russian drones targeted residential buildings in a densely populated urban area, civilian infrastructure and an educational facility were hit, head of Odesa regional administration, Oleh Kiper, wrote on his Telegram page Tuesday.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio suggested last week the US might soon back away from talks if they don't progress. He spoke in Paris after talks among US, Ukrainian and European officials produced outlines for steps toward peace and appeared to make some long-awaited progress.

A new meeting is expected Wednesday in London, and Rubio suggested it could be decisive in determining whether the Trump administration continues its involvement. Russia has stepped up in the past months its use of Shahed drones, expanding its production of the weapon and refining its tactics, the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in a recently published analysis. Meanwhile, both Russia and Ukraine are preparing for the spring-summer military campaign, Ukrainian and Western officials say. *—PTI*

SPAIN TO MEET NATO SPENDING GOAL

MADRID, 22 APRIL

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said on Tuesday that Spain will meet NATO's defence spending target this year, as pressure grows on the eurozone's fourth-largest economy and NATO laggard to boost its military expenditure.

Sánchez said the government will raise defence spending by 10.5 billion euros (USD 12 billion) to reach NATO's 2 per cent of GDP target. The spending would go toward telecommunications, cybersecurity and buying military equipment, he said, as well as raising salaries and adding troops to the armed forces.

Spain, which spent the least of all NATO members last year on has come under pressure, as the Trump administration has said its security priorities lie elsewhere.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly pushed NATO allies to raise defence spending to as much as 5 per cent of GDP. Facing what he called a "changing era," Sánchez said it was time for Spain to "take control of our own destiny" and contribute to Europe's rearmament. *—PTI*

Harvard sues Trump admin over funding freeze threats

WASHINGTON, 22 APRIL

Harvard University sued the President Donald Trump administration on Monday over constant threats of freezing funding of more than USD 2.2 billion, The New York Times reported. University President Alan M Garber accused Trump's administration of trying to wield "unprecedented and improper control," adding that the government's action would have "severe and long-lasting" consequences.

This development comes after the Trump administration demanded access to all university reports on antisemitism and anti-Muslim bias on campus generated since October 2023, claiming the university has allowed antisemitic language to remain unchecked on their campuses.

As reported by the New York Times, Garber, said that "as a Jew and as an American, I know very well that there are valid concerns about rising antisemitism." He added that the government need to legally engage with the university instead of seeking to control "whom we hire and what we teach."

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Massachusetts, accuses the government of unleashing a broad attack as "leverage to gain control of academic decision-making at Harvard." It also references other major universities that have faced abrupt funding cuts, the New York Times reported.

Earlier, Donald Trump criticised Harvard University, denouncing its hiring practices as "woke" and "Radical Left." He called the institution a "joke" and added that the university should not be considered on any list of the "World's Great Universities or Colleges." *—ANI*

The university claims the freeze is politically motivated and violates constitutional protections ***PHOTO: X***

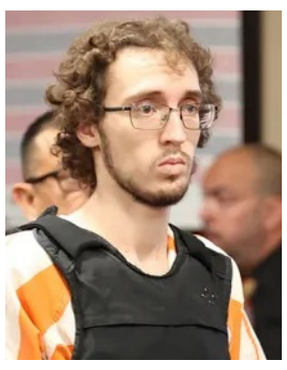
Racist gunman who killed 23 pleads guilty

EL PASO, 21 APRIL

In a trial that has rocked the nation, Patrick Crusius, 26, a white community college dropout who killed 23 people, targeting Hispanic shoppers at a Walmart in Texas in 2019, driving 1100 kms just to commit the crime, pleaded guilty Monday to capital murder.

Many victims' families sat across the courtroom, as he accepted a plea deal to take death penalty off the table. "You came to inflict terror, to take innocent lives and to shatter a community that had done nothing but stand for kindness, unity and love. You slaughtered fathers, mothers, sons and daughters," State District Judge Sam Medrano said.

"Now as you begin the rest of your life locked away, remember this: your mission failed. You did not divide this city, you strengthened it. You did not silence its voice, you made it louder. You did not instil fear, you inspired unity. El Paso rose, stronger and braver," he added. *—PTI*



Patrick Crusius ***PHOTO: X***

PERSON LURKING INSIDE TRUMP TOWER ARRESTED

New York, 22 April

Police have taken into custody a 30-year-old person lurking suspiciously inside Trump Tower in New York on Monday. New York city police reached the site on getting reports of a 'disorderly person' on 'elevated place' in the skyscraper that houses President Donald Trump's penthouse. The police department's emergency service unit took the person into custody. *—PTI*

WHITE HOUSE BACKS HEGSETH ON CHAT LEAK

Washington, 22 April

The White House has backed defence secretary Pete Hegseth following media reports that he shared sensitive military details in Signal messaging chat with his wife and brother. Neither the White House nor Hegseth denied it, instead responding to "disgruntled workers" whom they blamed for media leaks. They insisted that no classified information had been disclosed. *—PTI*

Justice will be done: FBI chief on Indian terrorist's arrest

NEW YORK, 22 APRIL

US agency Federal Bureau of Investigations's (FBI's) director Kash Patel has assured that "justice will be done" following the arrest of gangster-turned-terrorist Harpreet Singh in the country.

Singh alias Happy Passia alias Jora, hailing from Ajnala in Punjab's Amritsar, is wanted in multiple terror attacks across the state.

The FBI and the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations arrested him on 18 April in the US.

Singh is suspected to have collaborated with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and Khalistani terrorist group Babbar Khalsa International. He had been evading arrest.

The National Investigation Agency also announced a Rs 5 lakh cash reward on him in January. *—PTI*

GENERAL ELECTIONS

Aussies vote as Pope death shadows vigour

MELBOURNE, 22 APRIL

Australians began voting on Tuesday in the general elections as campaigning was overshadowed by the death of Pope Francis.

Polling stations opened to voters who, for a variety of reasons, will be unable to vote on 3 May. Around half the votes are expected to be cast before the election date.

Both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton cancelled campaign events planned for Tuesday out of respect for the late pontiff.

Flags were flown at half mast on government buildings across the country where a 2021 census found 20 per cent of the population were Catholics.

Albanese was raised as a Catholic but chose to be sworn in as prime minister when he was elected in 2022 by making a secular affirmation rather than by taking an oath on a Bible.

Albanese attended a Mass in honour of the pope in Melbourne's St Patrick's Cathedral on Tuesday morning. "I try not to talk about my faith in public," he told reporters. "At times like this, I think what people do is they draw on who they are and certainly my Catholicism is just a part of me," he added.

Dutton, who was raised by a Catholic father and Protestant mother, planned to go to a church service in Sydney. "I don't think there is a place for the body blows of politics today. I think it's a very different day from that. I think that the day is best spent reflecting," Dutton told Australian Broadcasting Corp. *—PTI*

Polling stations opened to voters who, for a variety of reasons, will be unable to vote on 3 May ***PHOTO: X***

- Both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton cancelled campaign events planned for Tuesday out of respect for the late pontiff

Indian held in S'pore for molesting cabin crew

SINGAPORE, 22 APRIL

A 20-year-old Indian national is set to be charged in Singapore on Tuesday for allegedly outraging the modesty of a female cabin crew member during a flight to the city-state.

The police were alerted to the incident at 12.05pm on 28 February, after a 28-year-old crew member was allegedly molested mid-flight. According to a police statement released on Monday, preliminary investigations revealed that the incident occurred while the crew member was escorting a female passenger to the lavatory.

As the crew member bent down to pick up a piece of tissue paper on the floor, the man allegedly appeared behind her, grabbed her, and forced her into the lavatory with him. The female passenger, who witnessed the incident, intervened and assisted the crew member in getting out immediately.

The matter was reported to the cabin supervisor, and upon landing at Changi Airport, the suspect was arrested by officers from the Airport Police Division. The name of the airline involved has not been disclosed. He will be charged with using criminal force with the intent to outrage modesty, a charge that carries a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment, a fine, caning, or a combination of these. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rupee falls 8P to settle at 85.23 against USD

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

The rupee consolidated in a narrow-range and settled for the day lower by 8 paise at 85.23 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as the support from positive domestic equities was negated by dollar short-covering by investors. Forex traders said foreign fund inflows supported the domestic unit. However, a recovery in crude oil prices dented investor sentiment. Moreover, concerns persisted over economic headwinds from tariffs and US monetary policy that could dampen demand. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.11 and moved between the intra-day high of 85.07 and the low of 85.23 against the greenback. *—PTI*

Over 90% of smart city projects completed: SBI

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Nearing its 10-year milestone, the Smart Cities Mission, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 June, 2015, has reported remarkable progress. A recent State Bank of India (SBI) report reveals that over 90 per cent of the projects under the initiative—totaling more than 8,000 multi-sectoral projects worth approximately Rs 1.64 lakh crore—have been completed. Specifically, 7,504 projects, with a value of Rs 1.50 lakh crore, have already been realised, highlighting substantial urban development across the nation. The Mission's primary focus has been on enhancing urban mobility and improving water and sanitation infrastructure, essential for building a cleaner, more sustainable urban environment. *—PTI*

Brigade firm aims Rs 175 cr revenue on 20-acre project

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Realty firm Brigade Enterprises Ltd will develop a 20-acre project comprising residential plots in Bengaluru with estimated revenue of Rs 175 crore. In a regulatory filing on Monday, the company said it has signed a joint development agreement for a plotted development project in Malur, East Bengaluru. "The project has a gross development value of approximately Rs 175 crore and a total development potential of 0.45 million square feet," it said. "We continue to identify high-potential land parcels that align with our long-term vision of creating well planned communities with a focus on quality, sustainability and innovation," said Pavitra Shankar, the realty firm's managing director. *—PTI*

Atal Pension Yojana registers 1.17 cr enrolments

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has surpassed 7.60 crore gross enrolments, as of 31 March, 2025, marking a milestone in its 10th year, according to a release by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). The PFRDA data reveals that in 2024-25, the scheme enrolled over 1.17 crore new subscribers, continuing its strong momentum with more than 1 crore new subscribers in each of the past three financial years. The total assets under management (AUM) now exceed Rs 44,780 crore, with annual returns of 9.11 percent since inception. In 2024-25, a record about 55 percent of new enrolled subscribers were women, reflecting increasing financial awareness and gender balance. Under APY, a subscriber would receive a lifelong minimum guaranteed pension of Rs.1000 to Rs 5000 per month from the age of 60 years, depending on their contributions. *—ANI*

In a first, gold crosses Rs 1 lakh-mark per 10g

The yellow metal price shot up by Rs 1,800 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Gold prices surged by Rs 1,800 to zoom past the crucial Rs 1 lakh-mark for 10g in the national capital on Tuesday amid buying rush by local jewellers and stockists in anticipation of increased demand during Akshaya Tritiya and wedding season even as global macroeconomic uncertainties continued to fuel safe-haven chase.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed Rs 1,800 to hit the lifetime peak of Rs 1,01,600 per 10g from Monday's closing level of Rs 99,800 per 10g.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped by Rs 2,800 to hit a record high of Rs 1,02,100 per 10g in the local markets on Tuesday. It had settled at Rs 99,300 per 10g in the preceding session.

Akshaya Tritiya, which is considered the most auspicious day to buy gold, falls on 30 April. The ongoing wedding season will continue till May end.

Gold has spurted by Rs 22,650 per 10g, or nearly 29 per cent, since December 2024.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed Rs 1,800 to hit the lifetime peak of Rs 1,01,600 per 10g from Monday's closing level of Rs 99,800 per 10g
-All India Sarafa Association

Gold has spurted by Rs 22,650 per 10g, or nearly 29 per cent, since December 2024 **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

Meanwhile, silver prices remained flat at Rs 98,500 per kg on Tuesday.

"The new all-time-high attained by the yellow metal is primarily influenced by the rising tensions between President Trump and US Fed Chair Jerome Powell regarding the interest rate cut.

While the gold price is on an upward trajectory, the fall in US dollar will make gold affordable in other currencies, keeping the demand-price dynamics balanced", Shah said.

In the overseas markets, spot gold rose by USD 75.55 or 2.2 per cent to hit a record high of USD 3,499.92 per ounce. Later, the yellow metal pared gains to trade at USD 3,466.93 per ounce, up by USD 42.56 or 1.24 per cent. *—PTI*

Govt extends tenure of RBI Dy Governor

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Indian government has granted T Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a one-year extension of his term, pushing his tenure until May 2026.

This marks the second consecutive one-year extension for Sankar, who was originally appointed as Deputy Governor in May 2021 for a three-year term.

The re-appointment received approval from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), which is chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The government order, issued on 21 April, confirms that Sankar will continue in this role from 3 May 2025 or until further notice.

Prior to his role as Deputy Governor, Sankar served as Executive Director at the RBI, overseeing several critical departments including Payment and Settlement Systems, Information Technology, Fintech, and Risk Monitoring. His experience extends beyond the RBI; he previously worked as a consultant for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from 2005 to 2011, focusing on the development of government bond markets and debt management. *—PTI*

T Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor **PHOTO: RBI**

Market rises for the 6th day

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Tuesday, extending the gaining streak to the sixth day on continuous foreign fund inflows and buying in banking shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 187.09 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 79,595.59. During the day, it jumped 415.8 points or 0.52 per cent to 79,824.30.

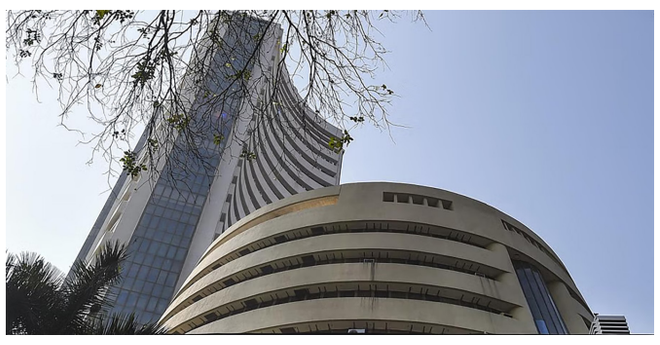
The NSE Nifty went up by 41.70 points or 0.17 per cent to 24,167.25.

From the Sensex pack, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Eternal, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the major gainers. IndusInd Bank, Power Grid, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,970.17 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, Shanghai SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled higher while South Korea's Kospi index and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 ended lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note.

US markets ended significantly lower on Monday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.61 per cent to USD 67.33 a barrel. *—PTI*



BSE Sensex climbed 187.09 points or 0.24 per cent, Nifty went up by 41.70 points or 0.17 per cent **PHOTO: PTI**

Gensol shares drop 5%, hit fresh lower circuit level

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Shares of Gensol Engineering tumbled five per cent to hit another lower circuit limit on Tuesday as investors continued to desert the company's counter amid the ongoing crisis at the firm.

On Tuesday, the stock tanked 4.97 per cent to Rs 106.10 -- the lowest trading permissible limit as well as 52-week low level -- on the BSE.

Shares of the firm dropped five per cent to Rs 105.17 -- the lower circuit as well as 52-week low level on the NSE.

From its 52-week high of Rs 1,125.75, the stock is now down 90.57 per cent.

Sebi received a complaint in June 2024 related to the manipulation of share price and diversion of funds from Gensol and thereafter, started examining the matter.

Additionally, Sebi directed Gensol Engineering to put its planned stock split into the ratio of 1:10 on hold. *—PTI*

Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian meets Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman in San Francisco, US **PHOTO: PTI**

FM invites global IT firms to India

SAN FRANCISCO, 22 APRIL

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday met several IT industry leaders and invited them to explore opportunities for technical collaboration and investment.

During a bilateral meeting with Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian and his team in San Francisco, Sitharaman encouraged them to explore local linkages in India for territorial collaboration and to develop tech for India and the world market under the 'Make In India' initiative.

They discussed the transformative evolution of India's digital infrastructure under the Digital India initiative, positioning the country as a global leader in tech adoption.

Kurian appreciated India's AI Mission and the trajectory India is taking under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He also emphasised the need to connect India to the global network through land and sea cable infrastructure.

During another meeting with Turing CEO Jonathan Siddharth, Sitharaman highlighted India's policy framework for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and encouraged his company to explore opportunities for collaboration and fruitful engagement. *—PTI*

Airtel to acquire Adani Data Networks

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said the company along with its subsidiary Bharti Hexacom Limited will acquire rights to use entire 400 megahertz spectrum (Mhz) of Adani Data Networks Limited (ADNL).

"Bharti Airtel Limited and its subsidiary Bharti Hexacom Limited have entered into definitive agreements with ADNL, a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, to acquire rights to use of 400 MHz of spectrum in Gujarat, Mumbai, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu," the statement said. *—PTI*

Asian shares trade mixed amid after Wall Street tumble

TOKYO, 22 APRIL

Asian shares were trading mixed amid global skepticism about US investments and President Donald Trump's trade war. Trading was cautious in Asia, where the benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 0.3 per cent to 34,174.38. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was virtually unchanged, inching up less than 0.1 per cent to 7,820.20. South Korea's Kospi gained 0.2 per cent to 2,493.19. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped less than 0.1 per cent to 21,387.51, while the Shanghai Composite added 0.3 per cent to 3,301.59. On Wall Street the previous day, the S&P 500 sank 2.4 per cent in another wipeout. That yanked the index that's at the centre of many 401(k) accounts 16 per cent below a record set two months ago. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 971 points, or 2.5 per cent, while losses for Tesla and Nvidia helped drag the Nasdaq composite down 2.6 per cent. *—PTI*

Flipkart to shift domicile to India

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Walmart group e-commerce firm Flipkart on Tuesday said it will shift its domicile to India from Singapore-- a move that can be seen as a step towards a potential public listing in the country.

At present, Flipkart is headquartered in Singapore.

"Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce platform, based and operating in India, has shared its intention to relocate its holding company to India," company said.

"This move represents a natural evolution, aligning our holding structure with our core operations, vast potential of Indian economy and our technology and innovation-driven capabilities to foster digital transformation in India," the statement said.

"As a company born and nurtured in India, this transition will further enhance our focus and agility in serving our customers, sellers, partners, and communities to continue contributing to the nation's growing digital economy and entrepreneurship," company said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Realty firm to invest Rs 250 cr in Bengaluru projects

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

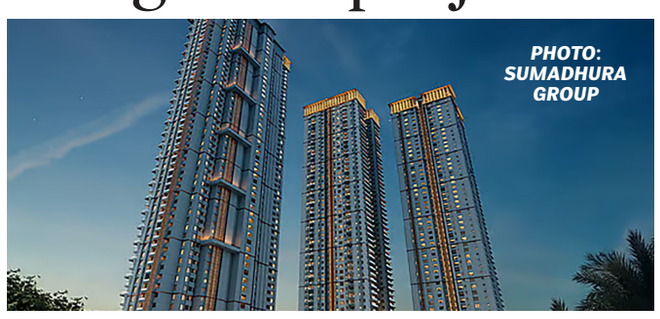
Realty firm Sumadhura Group will invest Rs 250 crore to develop a housing project in Bengaluru, the company said in a statement on Tuesday, adding that it has entered South Bengaluru with the launch of project Codename Uru located in Kenchanhalli.

Spread over 3.25 acres of land, this project is expected to generate a topline of Rs 500 crore. Expected to be completed by December 2029, it will have 297 homes across two towers of 28 floors each.

The company will invest about Rs 250 crore over the next four years.

Madhusudhan G, Chairman & Managing Director of Sumadhura Group, said "South Bengaluru has emerged as a vibrant growth corridor...we see this expansion as a natural step in our vision to create strategically developed and lifestyle-focused communities across Bengaluru."

In past 30 years, the company has delivered 54 projects comprising over 130 lakh square feet, and up to 400 lakh square feet area is in the pipeline. *—PTI*



IMF LOWERS INDIA'S GROWTH RATE TO 6.2%

NEW YORK, 22 APRIL

The Indian economy is projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in 2025-26, slower than earlier estimated rate of 6.5 per cent, due to escalated trade tensions and global uncertainty, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Tuesday.

"For India, the growth outlook is relatively more stable at 6.2 per cent in 2025, supported by private consumption, particularly in rural areas," IMF said in its World Economic Outlook (WEO).

India, which grew at 6.5 per cent in 2024-25, is projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in 2026-27, IMF said, adding that the growth rate is 0.3 percentage point lower than that in the January 2025 WEO update on "account of higher levels of trade tensions and global uncertainty".

According to the report, the global growth is projected at 2.8 per cent in 2025, lower by 0.5 percentage points estimated earlier. In 2026, the global economy is estimated to grow at 3 per cent.

For advanced economies, the report said that growth under the reference forecast is projected to drop from an estimated 1.8 per cent in 2024 to 1.4 per cent in 2025 and 1.5 per cent in 2026.

Growth for 2025 is now projected to be 0.5 percentage point lower relative to that in January 2025 WEO update projections. *—PTI*

AI RESHAPING INDIA

74% of firms to hire freshers for AI-related roles: Report

AI-related roles are taking the lead in the job market, which is in line with the government's push to reinstate the country's commitment to technological progression and workforce growth **PHOTO: FREEPIK**

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly reshaping the country's job market and a significant percentage of employers intend to hire freshers with varied AI-related roles in the first half of this year, a report said on Tuesday.

According to TeamLease EdTech's recent Career Outlook Report 2025, over 74 per cent of employers in the country intend to hire freshers during January-June 2025.

AI-related roles are taking the lead in the job market, which is in line with the government's push to reinstate the country's commitment to technological progression and workforce growth.

"The evolving job market is redefining how talent is evaluated. Employers are no longer just hiring for degrees, they're prioritising skills in areas like data visualization, cloud computing, and robotics.

"This shift is creating unparalleled opportunities for freshers to step into high-impact roles and become key drivers of innovation across industries," TeamLease EdTech Head of Employability Business and COO Jaideep Kewalramani said. TeamLease EdTech's recent 'Career Outlook Report 2025' is based on a survey among 649 employers across India.

The report revealed that after AI, 70 per cent of players in e-commerce and technology start-ups are planning to hire freshers, followed by the manufacturing sector at 66 per cent and engineering and infrastructure at 62 per cent.

Cities like Bangalore, Mumbai, and Chennai remain key employment hubs, with hiring intent in these cities reaching 78 per cent, 65 per cent, and 57 per cent, respectively. Companies are seeking talent that understands robotic process automation, performance marketing, network security, and financial risk analysis, said the report.

In terms of essential technology tools, employers prioritise productivity and collaboration tools, project management software and data visualization tools, it added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Slater gets a jail term for domestic violence

SYDNEY, 22 APRIL

Australian cricketer-turned-commentator Michael Slater was on Tuesday sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to multiple charges, including domestic violence, but will be allowed to walk free immediately after having served over a year in custody. According to a report in ABC Sport, his sentence was "partly suspended" due to the time served. The 55-year-old was charged with more than a dozen offences, including domestic violence, unlawful stalking or intimidation, breaking into a dwelling with intent at night, common assault, assault occasioning bodily harm, and choking or suffocation.—*PTI*

PHOTO: ASIAN BOXING

Siwach advances to Rd2 of Asian U-15 & U-17 C'ships

AMMAN, 22 APRIL

Indian boxer Aman Siwach eked out a hard-fought win over Abubakir Duisheev of Kyrgyzstan in the opening round of the Asian U-15 and U-17 Boxing Championships here. Competing in the men's U-17 63kg category, Siwach put up an impressive display to defeat Duisheev 4-1 on the third day of the continental tournament. Siwach's win was another solid victory for India's tally at the continental event, after triumphant results for both the men's U-15 and U-17 contingents on the first two days.However, Anshul Khasa went down 0-5 to Kuanysh Urumbassar of Kazakhstan in the men's U-17 70kg weight class.—*PTI*

India finishes third in Peru World Cup

LIMA, 22 APRIL

Indian shooters finished third at the ISSF World Cup after the pair of Prithviraj Tondaiman and Pragati Dubey failed to reach the medals round in the trap mixed team event, here on the final day. Simranpreet Kaur Brar fetched India's final medal in the women's 25m pistol event on Monday, taking the country's tally to seven, including two gold, four silver, and a bronze. While the USA also ended with seven medals, they edged ahead of India to take second place, courtesy of a higher gold-medal count. China finished on top of the standings with four gold, three silver, and six bronze medals.
—*PTI*

Dube announces ₹70,000 for 10 budding athletes

CHENNAI, 22 APRIL

In a heart-warming gesture, India all-rounder Shivam Dube on Tuesday promised to provide Rs 70,000 each to 10 budding athletes from Tamil Nadu. Dube, who plays for Chennai Super Kings. The talents who were awarded the scholarship were: PB Abhinandh (table tennis), KS Vhenisa Sree (archery), Muthumeena Vellasami (para athletics), Shameena Riaz (squash), Jayant RK, S Nandhana (both cricket), Kamali P (surfing), R Abinaya, RC Jithin Arjunan (both athletics), and A Takkshanth (chess).
—*PTI*

IPL: Misfiring SRH face resurgent Mumbai Indians

With only two wins in seven outings, SRH is desperate

Rohit Sharma and Ryan Rickelton run between the wickets during the IPL T20 match PHOTO: PTI

HYDERABAD, 22 APRIL

The misfiring Sunrisers Hyderabad will hope for a happy homecoming when they take on a resurrected Mumbai Indians here on Wednesday, eyeing a much-needed victory to revive their campaign in the Indian Premier League.

With only two wins in seven outings, SRH is desperate. Their power-packed batting has often let them down, while their bowlers are not making any strong impression either.

Their four-wicket defeat to MI in Mumbai on a tricky Wankhede pitch with grip and turn was the most recent instance of their frailties being exposed in challenging conditions. SRH batters thrive on flat wickets which produce high-scoring contests, and having a favourable surface against MI would give them the best chance to find some momentum. Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head will have their task cut out against MI, given SRH's chances of winning hinge, to a large extent, on the left-handed opening pair.

Their success in the power play defines the team's fortunes in a contest.

Abhishek smacked a 55-ball 141 in his last outing here against Punjab Kings to record the highest individual total for any batter in this IPL. —*PTI*

MI VS SRH

HEAD TO HEAD	
PLAYED:	24
MI Won:	14
SRH Won:	10

MI vs SRH Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

RR BREAK SILENCE

Tensions have escalated between the Rajasthan Royals and Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) after Jaydeep Bihani, convener of RCA's ad hoc committee, raised doubts over the RR's recent 2-run loss to Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL 2025. Bihani suggested the result might be questionable and even hinted at possible tampering. In response, the IPL franchise management has formally complained to the Chief Minister, Sports Minister, and Sports Secretary, calling for strict action against Bihani. Deep Roy, a senior official with the team, categorically dismissed Bihani's statements as "false, baseless, and without any evidence".

"It wasn't on my roster, explains absence from KKR-GT match commentary panel
-Harsha Bhogle, noted commentator

"KKR facing same failures as seen throughout this IPL
-Eoin Morgan, GT's former captain

Djokovic returns to Madrid seeking his 100th tour-level title

MADRID, 22 APRIL

Former champion Novak Djokovic has returned to the Madrid Open for the first time in three years in hopes of achieving his 100th tour-level title. Djokovic is seeded fourth in the same half of the draw as second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz, the home favorite who arrives at the Caja Magica this week with fitness concerns after reaching consecutive clay-court finals. The 37-year-old Djokovic, a three-time champion in Madrid, hasn't played in the Spanish capital since losing to Alcaraz in the 2022 semifinals, their first meeting.

Djokovic won his 99th title last August at the Paris Olympics. He has lost four finals since then, most recently last month in Miami.

The 100-title club features only Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103).

Over the last two weekends, Alcaraz has won the Monte Carlo Masters and lost in the Barcelona Open final, where he needed treatment on his upper right leg on Sunday.

"I'm confident it won't affect me in Madrid," he said. "That's what happens when you play so many matches and have so few days to rest. It's so demanding, and you have to give 100% every day. Having played a tournament like Monte Carlo and arriving in Barcelona with a few days to adapt is tough."

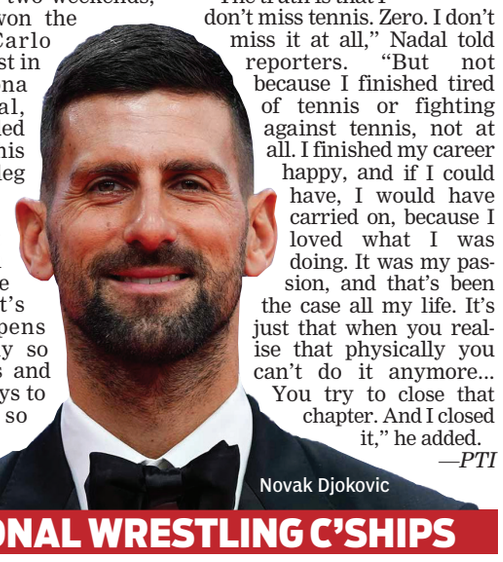
Alcaraz said fellow Spaniard Rafael Nadal, a five-time winner in Madrid, wrote to him after the Barcelona final to encourage him and say he hoped he wasn't injured.

"I bow at the feet of Rafa because of what he did week after week," Alcaraz said. "You have to respect that."

'I don't miss tennis at all,' says Rafael Nadal

The 38-year-old Spaniard, winner of 22 Grand Slam trophies, including 14 at Roland Garros, retired from the sport after his final match at the Davis Cup in Malaga in November.

"The truth is that I don't miss tennis. Zero. I don't miss it at all," Nadal told reporters. "But not because I finished tired of tennis or fighting against tennis, not at all. I finished my career happy, and if I could have, I would have carried on, because I loved what I was doing. It was my passion, and that's been the case all my life. It's just that when you realise that physically you can't do it anymore... You try to close that chapter. And I closed it," he added.
—*PTI*



Novak Djokovic

BUMRAH, MANDHANA WIN TOP WISDEN AWARDS

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Jasprit Bumrah — Smriti Mandhana

India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah was on Tuesday named as Leading Men's Cricketer in the World, while prolific batter Smriti Mandhana grabbed the honour in the women's category in the 2025 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanack.

The two Indian players were honoured for their stand-out performances last year.

The 31-year-old Bumrah picked up 71 Test wickets in season 2024 at an average of 14.92, the most by any bowler with such an economy in a single year. He became the first Test bowler in history to claim 200 wickets at an average of less than 20.

In the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, Bumrah almost single-handedly carried India's attack with 32 wickets at an average of 13.06.

At the T20 World Cup, he was named Player of the Tournament for his 15 wickets at an economy rate of just 4.17, leading India to their first ICC trophy since 2013.

Women's team senior batter Smriti Mandhana made it an India double as she was named as Wisden's Leading Women's Cricketer in the World. —*PTI*

Nottingham Forest beat Spurs in London to climb back to third

LONDON, 22 APRIL

Nottingham Forest beat Tottenham 2-1 to move into third place in the Premier League and deepen the gloom at White Hart Lane.

Forest was clinical in front of the goal and 2-0 up within 16 minutes against a team that showed many of the same failings that have dogged it all season.

Elliot Anderson's deflected shot bagged the opener after five minutes, and Chris Wood added a second with a header 11 minutes later. Between the two, Wood had a goal chalked off for offside.

Although Spurs controlled possession in the second half, it took until the 87th minute to score, when Richarlison netted a header.

The result was another disappointing one for Spurs fans, who booed their team off at the final whistle.

Nottingham Forest players celebrate after Nottingham Forest's Elliot Anderson, right, scored his side's opening goal PHOTO: @OFFICIALNFFC

Although Ange Postecoglou has guided the team to a Europa League semifinal, Monday's defeat was its 18th in 33 Premier League games and left it in 16th place.

For Forest, meanwhile, it was a return to winning ways after defeats by Everton and Aston Villa.

In third place, it was one point above Newcastle, two above Manchester City, and three above Chelsea and Aston Villa. They will be joined in the top tier next season by Leeds United and Burnley, both of which guaranteed spots in the Premier League with wins. —*PTI*

B'desh fights back against Zimbabwe in first test

SYLHET, 22 APRIL

Najmul Hossain Shanto hit 60 not out as Bangladesh fought back against Zimbabwe on a rain-truncated day three of the first cricket test. Shanto's knock, which included seven boundaries, helped Bangladesh reach 194-4 in its second innings with a 112-run overall lead before bad light forced an early stumps on Tuesday.

Jaker Ali is 21 not out.After the entire first session was washed out due to a wet outfield, Bangladesh resumed on 57-1 still 25 behind Zimbabwe and appeared to be in control thanks to Shanto, its captain, and Mominul Haque.But Zimbabwe struck back with the wicket of Mominul. —*PTI*

NATIONAL WRESTLING C'SHIPS

Satyanarayan wins Odisha's first medal

KOTA, 22 APRIL

Himanshi (53kg) and Muskan (59kg) grabbed gold medals on the concluding day of the U20 Wrestling Nationals, helping Haryana win the women's team championship. In the Greco Roman category, wrestler Satyanarayan won Odisha's first ever medal a bronze at the meet.

The concluding day featured competitions in three men's freestyle, three women's and four greco roman style categories. Haryana expectedly won all three team championships - men's freestyle (194 points), Greco Roman (195 points) and women's (214 points) but Odisha savoured a historic moment when Stayanarayan won state's first ever medal at Nationals in the 130kg category. Ashwani (65kg), Amit (79kg) and Sachin (92kg) emerged winners in the men's freestyle category while Mukul Chauhan (63kg), Aman (77kg), Prince (82kg) and Uttam Rana (130kg) grabbed gold in greco roman style.Apart from Himanshi and Muskan, Delhi's Drishti (68kg) finished on top of the podium in the women's event. —*PTI*

Advani, Sitwala top seeds in CCI billiards

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Several leading green baize exponents, including multiple-time world champion Pankaj Advani and Asian title winner Dhruv Sitwala, will be seen in action at the CCI Billiards Classic, scheduled to commence here on 28 April.

The action will begin with the qualifying rounds on April 25 and 26, where 48 contenders will compete for 12 spots in the main draw. The 12 qualifiers will join 20 elite players, who will then play in the league format. The Rs 10-lakh prize money tournament will be played in the three-ball classic format. England's Martin Goodwill, a former European Open champ, is the lone overseas player to be seeded in the tournament.Besides defending champion Advani, who is also the top seed here, the other elite players are Brijesh Damani, Raiyaani Razmi, Divaaj Haria, Ketan Chawla, and Rohan Jhambusaria.The winner will be richer by Rs 2.5 lakh while the runner-up will get Rs 1.5 lakh. —*PTI*

DELHI TO HOST ASIAN YOGASANA SPORTS C'SHIP FROM 25 TO 27 APRIL

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

India will host the second Asian Yogasana Sports Championship at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium here from April 25 to 27.

The championship will be organized by Yogasana Bharat in collaboration with the sports ministry and the Sports Authority of India.

A total of 170 athletes from 21 Asian countries will participate in the event. Forty technical officials, and 30 team managers and coaches will grace the event.

The championship will be held in four age categories: 10-18, 18-28, 28 to 35, and 35 to 45 years.

"It's a milestone moment for Yogasana sport as we host the Asian Championship in India and establish a global platform for our sport; my best wishes to the Indian team as this historic moment will echo for a lifetime in competitive sports," said Yogasana Bharat president Udit Sheth during the launch of theme song and unveiling of mascot for the event here on Tuesday. —*PTI*

SERIES AGAINST AUSTRALIA

I make most of opportunity: Midfielder Kujur

PERTH, 22 APRIL

Drafted into the senior national women's team following an impressive performance in the Hockey India League with JSW Soorma Club, young midfielder Ajmina Kujur is desperate to make the most of the opportunity in the upcoming five-match away series against Australia.

India is set to play two games against Australia A on 26 April and 27, followed by three matches against the Australian senior team on 1, 3, and 4 May at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

"I am grateful that they have given me a chance to play now, so I have to give my 100 per cent. Two years ago, I was in the senior team camp, but I didn't make it into the team. Now that I have been given this chance, I am going to ensure I make the most of it," Kujur said in a Hockey India release upon landing in Australia.

Ajmina Kujur

- Ajmina Kujur is desperate to make the most of the opportunity in the upcoming five-match away series against Australia.

Kujur had been training in the senior national camp in SAI, Bengaluru, since March 23 in preparation for the tour.

"Training with the seniors has been a wonderful experience. I am learning a lot, and I am excited to play with them ahead. Everyone has enjoyed training with each other, and now it is time for us to give it our best against Australia," the 23-year-old said. "The senior players are really helpful, especially Sushila di (Sushila Chanu), who has supported me a lot during the camp. She tells me every time I make a mistake and has taught me how to play to my strengths. I also tend to think a lot when I make an error, but the senior players have helped me cope with it, and I am a lot more confident now." At the start of the year, Kujur played a crucial role in the HIL (Women) as she featured in all seven matches for the runners-up side JSW Soorma Hockey Club.Next, she played the 15th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship for Odisha and, although her team was knocked out in the pool stage of Division A, she dished out a stand-out performance in the midfield. —*PTI*